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WHEN GOD COMES DOWN TO EARTH

WHEN GOD COMES DOWN TO EARTH

or

Epochal Crises, Past and Future

By

REV. GRANT STROH

INTRODUCTION

BY

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To the Good Wife
Whose Sympathy and Helpfulness
Have Made Possible
the Writing of the
Following Pages

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INTRODUCTION

I had just finished the perusal of "Social Environment and Moral Progress," by Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, when my friend, Grant Stroh, honored me with the request to write an introduction for his book. Some of my younger readers may not know that Dr. Wallace was distinguished as the co-discoverer of "Evolution" with Charles Darwin, and is justly entitled to be named with the greatest scientific investigators of the past fifty years or more. It is this circumstance that gives such weighty meaning to the awful indictment in his book against the "civilization" of the times in which we live, and in which he says that "the whole system of society is rotten from top to bottom, and the social environment is the worst the world has ever seen." All this in the face of our great boasting about progress, and in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for 1900 years! He has a remedy for it also—Eugenics, if you please. Nothing else than the principle of natural selection, "the survival of the fittest" applied to the marriage relation. "It is my firm conviction," he declares, "that when we have cleansed the Augean Stable of our present social organization, and have made such arrangements that *all* shall contribute their share either of physical or mental labor and that every one shall obtain the full and equal reward for his work, the future progress of the race will be rendered certain by the

fuller development of its higher nature acted on by a special form of selection which will then come into play."

Well said, Dr. Wallace! Every one believes that. But tell us, please, who will cleanse the Augean Stable, and make these "arrangements" of which you speak, and what will be their character? You say that man's power to utilize the forces of nature has advanced to an extent surpassing all the "centuries of recorded history," and also that "the result of this vast economic revolution has been almost wholly evil." Whence then will arise this renovating rejuvenating power? Who will put a stop to evil or change it into good?

Where the man of science ends, the man of faith begins. Read Grant Stroh when you are done with Alfred Russel Wallace. He is a Presbyterian minister of ripe culture, an experienced educator, and above all a devout student of the Bible for many years, who knows what he says and whereof he affirms. God has come down to this earth in times past, and is coming again, personally and visibly, to judge men and nations, to right wrongs, and to vindicate His Name. As our author says, "Whenever Satan gets control of the situation there is nothing else to be done." But mercifully, God forewarns men of these coming crises that they may escape the doom; and the purpose of this book is to convey that warning at the present time, and "by all means save some." May God give it a wide reading and a rich blessing for His Name's sake.

JAMES M. GRAY.

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PREFACE

THE author hereby gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to the many interpreters of the Scriptures, from whom he has received help, but he has not deemed it best to burden the reader with appeals to human authorities. In the absorbing study of Eschatology our sole dependence must be the Word itself.

But I wish in particular to express my deep gratitude to the writer of the Introduction, the Rev. James M. Gray, D. D., who was the first teacher to awaken me to the value of the synthetic study of the Bible. Analytical study is necessary, but the larger view of the Bible as a whole, of books and segments, of historical periods and dispensations, should precede the more detailed study, just as the study of a landscape as a whole should precede the detailed examination of separate groves and fields, hills and streams.

Whatever of freshness and value may characterize the studies herewith humbly sent forth, is due to the gradual illumination of truth to the mind of the author as he has patiently compared scripture with scripture. They are a growth rather than a creation.

The epochal crises are the culminations of preceding centuries. No single treatment of them is able to compass the sweep of their contents. If other Bible students

find new and fuller lessons in the study of these crises, we shall rejoice with them. God's Word as a whole, and in nearly every portion, is infinite in its fullness, and every angle of vision reveals new wonders which both awe and inspire us.

The author's appeal is solely to the Scriptures themselves, and he asks only that the studies be pursued with an open-mindedness to the witness of the truth. They are prophetical studies with a historical background. The unfulfilled events of future crises are interpreted in the light of similar events in preceding crises which have passed into history and have been handed down to us for our instruction and guidance. Thus the argument from the past to the future is fully warranted. Indeed we have no other safe guide.

All of the Bible references are to the American Revision, because in most instances it gives the most accurate translations.

GRANT STROH.

A

A Preview of the Epochal Crises

A PREVIEW OF THE EPOCHAL CRISES

1. General Survey of Conditions.
2. Epochal Crises Precipitated by Moral Conditions.
3. Each Crisis Signalized by the Descent of God to the Earth.
4. Periods of Divine Judgment.
5. God Mercifully Forewarns Men.
6. The Crises Exhibit God's Grace and Mercy.
7. The Prominent Part Played by Satan.
8. The Epochal Crises Are Racial in Character.
9. The Brevity of Each Crisis Period.
10. Summary.

A PREVIEW OF THE EPOCHAL CRISES

WITHOUT a clearly defined knowledge of God's plans for the world we are at sea without chart or compass. Nor can modern science or philosophy place in our hands the golden key that will unlock the mysteries of the Divine will. Here we may not hazard a guess nor jump blindly at conclusions. Only as God has deigned to reveal His will can we know what tomorrow may bring either of glory or of gloom.

Much of our modern Biblical scholarship has concerned itself with non-essentials—questions of textual and literary criticism and of human authorship. These are important, but non-essential. They have sacrificed life to mere form. Curious and sometimes irreverent study of the Word has sapped its vitality. In some quarters the merely intellectual study of the Bible has quite obscured the necessity of spiritual enlightenment and discernment.

There is a microscopic study of words and phrases that is extremely profitable. But as the miner may become so absorbed in prospecting and in digging holes that his soul is seldom enrapt with the glories of the mountains themselves, so may students of the Bible become so absorbed in details that they do not even glimpse the immensity and grandeur of God's plans as a whole. Visions of God's plans for the

EPOCHAL CRISES, PAST AND FUTURE

The Common Characteristics	Crises That Are Past					Crises That Are Future	
	The Edenic Crisis	The Flood Crisis	The Babel Crisis	The Egypt Crisis	The Cross Crisis	The Premillennial Crisis	The Postmillennial Crisis
Deplorable Moral Conditions	Entrance of Sin	Insufferable	Rebellion	Idolatry	Hopeless	Days of Noah Repeated	Final Rebellion
God Comes Down to Earth	Walked in the Garden	Talked with Noah	"Let us go down"	"I am come down"	"I am come down"	"I will come again"	Still upon the earth
Periods of Judgment	The Curse	Devastation	Dispersion	Plagues	The Crucifixion	Seals, Trumpets, Vials of Wrath	The Great White Throne
Foretold	To Adam and Eve	Through Noah	No Record	Through Moses	Isaiah 53 an example	Prophets, Christ, Apostles	John and Others
Racial Extent	Representatively	Race Nearly Annihilated	Entire Race	Representatively	Representatively	World-wide	World-wide
Prominence of Satan	The Tempter	The Cause of its Sin	Inspirer of Rebellion	Behind the Gods of Egypt	Tempter of Christ	Wrath and Binding	Loosed and Doomed to Lake of Fire
Brevity of the Periods	A Single Day (?)	Forty Days and Nights	No Record, but Brief	Two Years (?)	Three and a Half Years	Climax Covers 3½ Years	"A Little Time"
Divine Mercy	Promise of Victory	Noah and Family are Saved	Dispersion instead of Annihilation	Deliverance and Preservation of the Israelites	Salvation Provided for the Race	The Sealed of Israel and a Saved Multitude of the Gentiles	A New Heaven and a New Earth

race never enrapture their souls as these revealed plans sweep majestically onward to the final crises of history. This telescopic study of the Bible is quite as interesting and important as the microscopic study.

God's plan of redemption embraces all history. But redemption involves not alone the soul. A physical as well as a spiritual redemption is also necessary and certain. The curse of sin affected not only man, but the whole creation (Rom. 8:20-22). Neither did the Divine plan of redemption culminate in the Cross. The Cross was necessary, but it was only one step in the redemptive processes of the ages. Nor was it the final step. Further acts and interventions of God are needed to complete the world's redemption and establish His kingdom upon the earth.

God's plan of redemption has been marked by a twofold method—first, by repeatedly permitting man largely to work out his own salvation, or *attempting* so to do, and, secondly, by sometimes suddenly and miraculously intervening in the affairs of men to eradicate evil and to enthrone the right. These two methods have regularly alternated with each other and have dominated the course of human history. They unfold God's will in the past and reveal it for the future. When age-long sin ripens and brings forth its fruit, and when it becomes necessary for God to miraculously check and divert the course of history, *then we have the great epochal crises of history.*

Epochal Crises Precipitated by Moral Conditions

These crises of history are precipitated *because of deplorable moral conditions.* The entrance of sin into the Garden in Eden demanded the execution of the punishment which God had said would follow. An acute crisis had come and could not be postponed. Likewise when God looked down from heaven and saw the awfulness and the irremediableness of the moral condition of the antediluvians, another crisis had come and God must again directly intervene in the affairs of men. Similarly, we shall see each of the great epochal crises to be precipitated by deplorable and insufferable moral conditions which grip society and throttle its best aspirations. Whenever Satan gets control of the situation there is but one thing to be done. God must come down and exercise His right of intervention. *His will is and must be supreme.*

God Descends to the Earth

Each of these crisis periods is *further signalized by the personal descent of God to the earth.* God *walked in the Garden* and called to Adam. Centuries later God *repeatedly talked with Noah.* When the Babelites boastfully rebelled against God, He said: "Come, LET US GO DOWN, and there confound their language." When the slave-cry of the Israelites in Egypt reached heaven, God suddenly appeared to Moses in the wilderness and said, "I AM COME DOWN to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians."

"I AM COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN," was the startling announcement of Jesus to His enemies and doubting disciples. It was because of His claim to be "the living bread which CAME DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN," coupled with the necessity of eating this bread, that perplexed and angered the Jews and repelled many would-be followers. Yet John could afterwards refer to this first coming of Christ, and say in simple majesty, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us ....and no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that DESCENDED OUT OF HEAVEN, even the Son of man, who is in heaven..... He that cometh from above is above all."

But we are looking forward to another coming down of God to the earth when the world is in anguish by reason of the woes of the Premillennial crisis. Two distinct stages mark this personal descent of God to the earth. The first is when "THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," in order to gather to Himself in the air both the dead and the living saints. The second stage will be that described in the Revelation, when the heavens shall be opened and He that rideth upon the white horse of victory shall in righteousness judge and make war, and smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron. At that time "the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever."

Special space in this brief preview is devoted to these

personal descents of God to the earth not only because they are common to all of these crises, but because they are the key to these crises. These descents of God to the earth are necessitated by the acute conditions in society, and also explain the unparalleled events of these crises. Ordinarily God holds His hands off, permitting men to solve, if they can, their own problems of sin and government. God starts each new dispensation aright and personally intervenes only when men prove themselves unequal to the task of self-government. But when the down grade of the race threatens its utter destruction, then God descends to save His own and to punish the wicked.

Periods of Divine Judgment

These crucial periods of history, where the great dispensations touch and tangle, are *always periods of Divine judgment.* The Edenic crisis was marked by its fearsome sentences upon the man and the woman, upon the serpent and the earth. The devastation of the Flood was the most signal of all the judgments that are past. But the dispersion of the Babelites and the awful plagues upon the Egyptians bear further testimony to the punitive character of these epochal crises. They will be surpassed in severity only by the sweeping judgments of the two future crises.

God Mercifully Forewarns Men

Because these crisis periods partake so largely of severity and doom *God has mercifully forewarned*

men of their coming. With possibly a single exception (the Babel judgment) the people of each dispensation, or the leading actors, have been told what would befall men in case they refused to obey God. And this in ample time to escape the coming doom. Adam and Eve were not ignorant of impending judgment if they should disbelieve and disobey God. It was fully revealed to Noah that God would destroy men from the face of the earth. The building of the Ark and the preaching of Noah afforded men a long time in which they might have come to repentance. The Egyptians need not have suffered the Plagues, but Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to yield to the demands of God. During the most recent epochal crisis Christ warned the Jews what would happen to their city and nation because of their rejection of Him. Likewise the awful judgments of the approaching epochal crisis, which shall afflict the whole world, God has faithfully portrayed in the Revelation which He gave to Jesus Christ, who sent and signified it by an angel unto His servant John.

Exhibit God's Grace and Mercy

Another characteristic of these epochal periods, one that is in striking contrast with the judgments of God, is the softer colors of the pictures; *for they are all aglow with exhibitions of His grace and mercy.* The God of vengeance is still the God of love. Two examples from the past will illustrate. The Flood judgment came and swept away the ungodly from the earth,

but in the years preceding God was calling sinners to repentance, and meanwhile prepared the Ark for the saving of righteous Noah and his household. Also during the plagues upon Egypt God preserved His own people and at the last gave them a wonderful deliverance. And with reference to the future "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," there will be eternal life for "them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption" (Rom. 2:5-7). Even though "wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish" shall come upon every soul that worketh evil, there will also come "glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good" (Rom. 2:8-10). Thus we who face the transition from the Gospel Age to the Millennial Age may rest in the assurance that God has promised to deliver His people from the dreadful day of His wrath. Having this hope for ourselves it remains for us to warn others and to help them to escape.

The Prominent Part Played by Satan

One of the most marked and sinister characteristics of these outstanding periods is *the prominent part played by Satan.* Usually he appears in the foreground, though in several instances he reveals himself only in the general character of the play or in the cast of his puppet players. With but a single exception (the Book of Job), Satan comes into clear view upon the stage of history only in these convulsive epochs. His first appearance was in the Garden in

Eden as the instigator of sin and the enemy of man, and his final appearance will be in the last great epoch, at which time the doom pronounced upon him by God in Eden will culminate in his being cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10). It is intensely interesting to see the prominent part Satan plays in each of these great dramas of history.

Epochal Crises Are Racial

These convulsive periods of history are *not national, but racial.* However local the events in themselves they are race-wide in their intent. The entrance of sin into the Garden in Eden, and the judgments which followed, greviously afflicted the entire race. Whether the Flood was universal or not its effect upon the entire race was the same. The judgment upon the builders of Babel alone accounts for the confusion of tongues and the early dispersion of peoples and nations. And the purpose of the call of Abraham was distinctly announced to include blessing upon "all the families of the earth." The fourth crisis had to do chiefly with the Israelites and the Egyptians, but the new order of things had in view the preservation of the true religion and the re-establishment of God's government in all the earth. Clearer still is the world-view of the epoch signalized by the Cross, by which Christ would "draw all men" unto Himself. More general still will be the world-wide judgments of that future crisis which we now seem to be approaching, in which will occur "the hour of trial, THAT HOUR

WHICH IS TO COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD TO TRY THEM THAT DWELL UPON THE EARTH." It will be apparent when we consider both the Premillennial and the Postmillennial crises that they too are world-wide in their extent.

The Brevity of Each Crisis Period

The *time element* in each of these convulsive periods is *relatively short.* The importance of this fact can hardly be overestimated. The Edenic crisis appears upon the scene suddenly and disappears abruptly. Temptation, sin, expulsion from the Garden—such is its brief history. And although the succeeding crises are longer, yet in comparison with the intervening dispensations they are short indeed. This is one of the most significant characteristics to remember. Not recognizing the brevity of these acute crisis periods, many interpreters have erred in extending the approaching crisis over centuries instead of over only a few short years. But, as we shall see, both the character of the events and the language used in describing them demand brevity of transpiration. It concerns us to know that the Premillennial crisis will be sharp and acute, like all of the preceding epochal crises.

Summary

Thus at the points where the great dispensations meet and overlap we deal with the most vital portions of history. The most important portions of the Bible describe these transitional scenes. Here we behold

the massive upheavals of history. The great events of the intervening dispensations may be important, but they dwindle into the insignificance of foothills in comparison with rugged, precipitous, and supernatural events of these epochal crises.

During these convulsive crises occur the most unusual and catastrophal events of history. In them culminates the struggle between the good and the evil of each preceding dispensation; in them the natural course of history is diverted into new and better channels; in them God personally descends and intervenes to overthrow the wrong and to save his own people who become the holy seed of a new dispensation. Possessing the common characteristics which we thus have previewed, we readily see the importance of a special study of them. Since prophecy is simply unfulfilled history a knowledge of these common traits enables us better to understand and to interpret the events of the two great epochal crisis that are still in the future.

B

The Crises Already Past

I

The Edenic Crisis

THE EDENIC CRISIS

1. The Brevity of the Account.
2. Precipitated by the Entrance of Sin.
3. God in the Garden.
4. A Judgment Period.
5. The Swiftness of Divine Vengeance.
6. Mercy in the Midst of Judgment.
7. Satan Not At Once Destroyed.
8. Man Without Excuse.
9. Arguing From the Past to the Future.

THE EDENIC CRISIS

THE First Epochal crisis had to do with the end of the first, or Edenic Dispensation, and the beginning of the second, or Adamic Dispensation. We have this period only in barest outline. Yet the brief account contains the leading characteristics that are common to all of the succeeding similar periods. It is these common features of the periods that are past which enable us to recognize the two epochs that are still future, i. e., those contained in the Book of Revelation.

Precipitated by the Entrance of Sin

We have no means of knowing how long Adam was alone in the Garden, nor how long both Adam and Eve were there prior to the Temptation and Fall. But the entrance of sin marked the beginning of the end of Edenic innocence and bliss. The result of the choice of evil instead of good, of self-will instead of God's will, of rebellion instead of obedience, was the revelation of a Divine plan of redemption which should eventually demonstrate to all creation that God's will is the wisest and best for all.

God in the Garden

It may seem trivial to emphasize the presence of

God in Eden; but the simple fact that Eden was upon the earth makes that presence significant. It is important that the fact of God's descending to the earth in each epochal crisis be grasped at once. Heaven is God's throne, His dwelling-place. Therefore the occasion must be unusual and urgent that brings God to the earth. The entrance of sin into the world was one of those rare and urgent occasions. That day of disaster did not close before God was personally upon the scene to thwart the most serious consequences of sin and to punish the participants.

Jehovah God *walked in the Garden* in the cool of the day. Adam, conscience-stricken, tries to explain why he is in hiding. "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" Such is the condemning inquiry which opened the way for the sentence of doom and the promise of final victory. But what I here wish to stress is the significant fact that Jehovah God walked and talked in the Garden when the Edenic crisis came, *and that God came down from heaven to do this thing.*

A Judgment Period

First of all, the sin that compelled a change in God's dealings with man and introduced a new dispensation must be punished. Judgment swiftly descended upon each of the actors in the awful drama. Both they and their descendants must know that the scene of sin is also the sphere of wrath. This is true to the end,

and is manifest in each epochal period. The judgments of God are not all hermetically sealed until the life after death. As we shall see later the Great Day of God's Wrath is not for the dead only, but also for the living. It is to purge the earth, not hell.

The first consequence of sin (an indirect judgment) was the sense and the shame of nakedness (Gen. 3:7). Innocency gave place to self-consciousness. Adam and Eve hastily manufactured a flimsy covering for their bodies out of fig-leaves in the vain attempt to hide their guilty consciences. But no man-made scheme can cover sin. Though so frequently attempted there is yet the dread fear of facing God, and the lurking desire to hide one's self from His presence (v. 10). Sin induces shame and cowardice. Remorse is its chiefest penalty. But the sinner cannot hide from the presence of God. One of the terrors of the Great Day of His Wrath will be the beholding of the "face of him that sitteth upon the throne" (Rev. 6:16). The instinct of Adam and Eve to hide themselves is the instinct of every one who is conscious of his sin, yet who has no covering but some futile device of his own.

The actors in the first great drama of sin experienced the direct judgments of God. Some were immediate, others remote; but all were real and far-reaching. For the woman there was in store special pangs and pains and humiliation (Gen. 3:16). Hers the first sin, and hers the chiefest suffering. But hers also the chiefest triumph, for it is the Seed of the *woman* who finally will conquer the seed of the Serpent (v. 15). The

story of this ultimate victory is reserved for the last book of the Bible.

For the man in particular is the curse upon the ground. Henceforth, toil and sorrow, thorns and thistles, and sweat; and at last, a grave and a return to dust! A bitter judgment indeed, and the more so because of the memories of past blessedness; for the sharpest sting of the judgment for both Adam and Eve must have been the exclusion from the delightsome garden. But no place for the sinner is found in God's garden. Its cooling shade, its luscious fruits, its heavenly companionship—all were forfeited, and the Cherubim and the flaming swinging sword guarded against return.

The Swiftness of Divine Vengeance

As in each of the following epochal crises we shall note the comparative brevity and swiftness of God's vengeance when the fullness of time comes, so here, closely following their rebellion against God, at the hour of the day when formerly they had held sweet fellowship with Him, Adam and Eve were startled by hearing "the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day," and at once sought to hide themselves from His presence. But no longer finding delight in that presence they are doomed to separation from it. Already they have sought voluntarily to hide from God, and now He immediately banishes them from His garden. It does not take long. A single, awful day! A morning or afternoon of

listening to Satan, and an evening of hearing their doom pronounced by God! Thus do the epochal crises essentially differ from the dispensations. The course of events that human history ordinarily takes swings on from century to century, but the direct judgments of God during the epochal crises occupy a comparatively brief period.

Mercy in the Midst of Judgment

Yet in the midst of the Edenic judgments mercy was shown, as always. Man must be given a new trial. For this other dispensations were necessary. God was gracious. First, there was the promise that following the secret enmity and open conflict between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the Serpent, shall come the final defeat of Satan. The culmination of the conflict of these two seeds, Christ and Antichrist, occurs in the epochal crisis which the world is now facing. But the Seed of the woman shall surely triumph, according to the promise.

The second exhibition of mercy with which God began the new dispensation was shown, as many believe, in the covering that He provided for the man and the woman. "And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen 3:21). Fig-leaf aprons were wholly insufficient for the covering of a guilty conscience. In the slain animals may we not see, as others have suggested, the first of that long series of sacrifices which pointed to

the sacrificial Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world?

The third exhibition of mercy was veiled in the judgment of casting Adam and Eve out of the garden. This was merciful, lest man, the sinner, "put forth his hand and take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." Immortal life here upon earth was a possibility, yet God would prevent man from forever prolonging here a life of sin. Not until the earth is purified and purged from sin and all of its consequences will man again behold the Tree of Life, which comes into view in the Revelation, bearing its twelve manner of fruits. "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life" (Rev. 22:14). There is also the special promise: "To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

Satan Not at Once Destroyed

But no mercy was shown to the instigator of sin. For him there was only condemnation. In Revelation 12:9 he is called the "great dragon," the "old serpent," the "Devil and Satan," the "deceiver of the whole world." *He plays a prominent part in each of the great Epochal Periods of history.* During each of the Dispensations he seems to get his way with the major portion of the race, for each ends in apparent failure so far as man is concerned, requiring the intervention of God. The curse pronounced upon the

serpent whose form Satan assumed, affected not in the least the character of Satan, neither did it destroy his power to inflict evil upon man. But whatever his wiles, and however successful his repeated attacks, his doom was announced from the beginning. During all these intervening centuries of sin's desolations Satan has known that the day is set for the execution of his sentence. Never more active is his hatred against men than at present, yet soon may break upon the world the next epochal period (Rev. 4-19), which will bring about the binding of Satan for a thousand years; after which he will deceive the nations for the last time and then himself be cast into the Lake of Fire. Although his sentence was announced by God when he first enticed man to sin, the execution of the sentence awaits the winding up of all affairs relating to the earth in its present form, the expunging of all sin and evil, and the final judgment of the wicked. Meanwhile Satan is in ceaseless antagonism to Christ and His people, deceiving and sifting and afflicting. As the present Age draws to a close Satan will greatly multiply his activities. But the real crisis of his career will occur in the next epoch, when he shall be cast out of heaven. Then he will have "great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:12). We have the warning that it will be a time of woe—a warning heralded from heaven.

Man Without Excuse

The Divine judgments which formed the crisis of

the Edenic Age were amply foretold. Herein is another proof of God's great mercy. So far as man was concerned he was without excuse. God had expressly said, "For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Here certainly was *warning of a coming and speedy judgment.* Had it been heeded the history of the world's sin would never have been written. But over against the Divine warning of doom Satan put a lie: "Ye shall not surely die." And because Adam and Eve believed the lie sin entered from God, driven from the garden and the tree of the world, and death through sin. Man was separated life, and the awful reign of death at once began, as Paul has declared (Rom. 5:12). The Devil lied. God's warning should have been heeded. *But the judgments yet to come upon the world have also been divinely and fully prophesied, and Satan is as busy as formerly in teaching men to doubt and deny them.* They who do not believe these prophecies will be as inexcusable as were Adam and Eve. One such word of warning will here suffice. The Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul, declares, "and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints,

and to be marveled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day."

Argument from the Past to the Future

This special passage has been selected because of its similarities to the judgments in Eden. Here, as there, angels participate; only here their weapon is "flaming fire" instead of flaming sword. Here, as there, the punishment is on account of disobedience. Here, as there, the vengeance of God is chiefly manifested in separation from His presence; only here it is "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord." They of the present age who lightly reject the Gospel and substitute an "eternal hope" would do well to give heed to the sure word of prophecy, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place (2 Pet. 1:19). The certain and literal fulfillment of prophecy in the great epochs that are past are a warning to us that the judgments prophesied as still in the future will surely fall upon them that know not God, and them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

II

The Flood Crisis

THE FLOOD CRISIS

1. No Salvation Through Conscience or Mere Knowledge.
2. The Severity of the Flood.
3. Satan Behind the Scenes.
4. Will God Again Judge the World?
5. The Flood Foretold.
6. The Brevity of the Flood.
7. Offers of Mercy.
8. The Type of the True Church Not Noah, but Enoch.

THE FLOOD CRISIS

MAN was driven from Eden, but he retained his knowledge of good and evil. Satan did not wholly deceive Adam and Eve. Their eyes were indeed opened. But what use would they make of their new knowledge? Would the good triumph or the evil? Time must be given to fully demonstrate that an enlightened conscience possesses no power to preserve man from the corruption of sin. Yet in our own day some are advocating that man needs no guide or corrector other than conscience. They say that under the sting or the approval of this inner monitor there is no need of church or creed or even of a Divine revelation. According to them conscience is both executioner and rewarder. But the sad failure and wreck of the antediluvian world forever demonstrated that conscience alone has no power to eradicate sin. Let the Flood attest that something more is needed to elevate and restore a fallen race. Under the second testing of man, which extended over a millennium and a half and ended in calamitous failure, society became wholly corrupt. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Sin brought forth its fruit. The knowledge of evil prevailed over the knowledge of good. There is no salvation in mere knowledge. Here is a warning for modern educators. So corrupt had men

become that nothing but the direct intervention of God could save the race from self-annihilation. This intervention is recorded in the crisis of the Flood.

God Again upon the Earth

In connection with the events of the Flood there is no explicit statement, as in succeeding periods, of God coming down to the earth. But the revelation to Noah of the coming destruction of the race, and also the detailed specifications of the Ark and the minute directions given to Noah, would seem to be sufficient grounds for the assumption that the Flood crisis, as all others, was marked by the personal presence of God upon the earth. The account is so realistic, with no hint of dream or vision, that it is difficult not to think that Noah, like Adam, "heard the voice of Jehovah God," as He talked with him.

The Severity of the Flood

The sentence which God pronounced against the degenerate descendants of Adam and Eve was utter destruction. "And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground." The execution of the sentence occurred in the second epochal crisis of human history. The outstanding characteristic of this period was the *supernatural judgment of God upon an apostate race.*

"And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Such language would

imply a state of unrestrained sin and also lawlessness and anarchy. The outlook was hopeless even to God. Mere reformatory measures would not be remedial. Only the most drastic means could avert racial suicide. The destruction of the major portion of the race would be preferable to the suicide of the whole. So the Flood came. "All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." And "all flesh died." "Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the Ark." Such was the appalling judgment of God upon the first great apostacy of the race.

Satan Behind the Scenes

There is no mention of Satan here. But the moral conditions are such that we know he is behind the scenes. The chief reason given for the demoralization of society seems to be the intermarriage of the sons of God with the daughters of men. This has been explained by some to mean the illicit intercourse of fallen angels with women. Possibly this might be. It is a theory not to be lightly rejected. But a more natural explanation is that there was intermarriage between the followers of God and those who were not, but who in reality were followers of Satan. The lines of separation were crossed over. Fair women, of devilish character and design, ensnared the sons of God, i. e., the followers of the God-religion. The phrase, "and they took them wives of all that they choose," hints that polygamy prevailed. The re-

sult of this intermarriage between the true religionists and the worldlings was moral degeneracy. Giants there were in those days, but famed only for human prowess. They were men of might and also of force and cruelty, for "the earth was filled with violence." The principles of God became supplanted by the principles of the Evil One, necessitating the intervention of God in devastating judgment. The devilish "white slave" traffic of the present day is probably only a faint suggestion of the prevailing prostitution that swept over the antediluvian world. Even the daughters of Noah seem to have become tainted with the sin of their worldly associates. Satan's hold upon men could be loosened only by destroying men themselves.

Will God Again Judge the World?

Will God again visit the earth with devastating judgments? This is a question of special interest to us. Many are saying, "No." Either they are ignorant or else they falsify the Word of God. Our Saviour likened the condition of the earth at the time of His return to its condition at the time of the Flood. He declared that the antediluvians were so absorbed in their feastings and social functions up to the very day in which Noah entered into the Ark that the suddenness of the Flood "took them all away; SO SHALL BE THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN" (Matt. 24:37-39).

The Apostle Peter is explicit concerning a future sweeping judgment, declaring that "the day of the

Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). And Peter enforces his prophecy by an appeal to the judgment of the Flood: "There were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men" (3:5-7).

Thus the world is facing another day of judgment. This fiery renovation will occur in the Day of the Lord, beginning with the return of our Lord in glory and ending with the passing away of the existing earth at the close of the Millennium. The Day of the Lord will indeed "come as a thief" upon an unsuspecting world, but its close will be the most spectacular event in history. God will again visit the earth with His purifying judgments prior to the establishment of both His Millennial and His Eternal kingdoms. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness?" He who created can also destroy. The Word of God is sure. The Flood is ample proof. God will again judge the world, not once, but twice, in the two crisis periods

that are still future. "But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13).

The Flood Was Foretold

But the Flood was fully prophesied. For one hundred and twenty years before the Flood came mankind had been warned (Gen. 6:3). The revelation came to Noah, the only man who "walked with God." God told Noah what He was going to do to the world (6:13), and we can scarcely believe that Noah failed to notify others. Peter speaks of Noah as a "preacher of righteousness" to his generation, and he surely would not have refrained from depicting the terrors of the coming judgment. Moreover, the building of the Ark must itself have been a warning. So extraordinary a vessel, so unlike anything man had ever invented, and so huge, must have excited curiosity and caused a questioning of Noah, who necessarily would unfold the facts of the revelation that he had received from God.

During the entire period of the building of the Ark the attention of men was constantly directed to the coming destruction. Finally, the gathering of the animals into the Ark, apparently of their own accord (6:20), was a warning that the Flood was near at hand. But all faith had perished from the earth. Men no longer believed in God. Noah only and his family were found worthy to be preserved from the impending doom. And although God has spoken of

another "day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men," which introduces the Day of the Lord, yet men with mockery are asking, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Following the example of the Apostle Peter we would simply refer all such doubters to God's Word back to the Flood.

The Brevity of the Flood

It is important, in view of future judgment periods, that attention be called to the brevity of the Flood. Only forty days and nights were required for the Flood to come, though it prevailed for about one year (Gen. 7:11 with 8:13, 14). This was a comparatively short time for such a sweeping destruction. But all of the judgment crises are short, and necessarily so. Besides, there is no need for them to be prolonged and God has mercifully shortened them. What Christ has promised with reference to the period of the Great Tribulation is true of all the epochal crisis periods: "And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Offers of Mercy

Although the Flood could not be averted offers of mercy doubtless were made to all who would repent. The righteous preaching of Noah certainly contained this gracious message. God's harshness is the harshness of love. He resorts to judgment only as a last extremity and after all offers of mercy have been spurned.

Here again Peter gives us a side light upon this period, referring to it as a time "when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing" (1 Pet. 3:20). Men would not hear; they were "disobedient"; but during the long period of the building of the Ark God was waiting to show them mercy.

Yet only Noah "found favor in the eyes of Jehovah." Why so? Because Noah "was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations." Not that he was perfect in a sinless sense, but that he lived blamelessly before God. He had kept himself separated from the lawlessness and the corruption of the world around him. His secret was that he "walked with God," and that he "did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him." And when that iniquitous world was destroyed, "Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark" (Gen. 7:23). That judgment found the earthly people of God in the only place of safety. Likewise in the approaching epochal crisis, when our Lord shall return from heaven, there will be an earthly people miraculously preserved who will rule the millennial earth. They are the sealed remnant of Israel and the great multitude of Gentiles who come out of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7).

The Type of the Church

But the Church of this present age is heavenly in origin, in character, and in destiny, and hence is not typified by Noah, who was preserved in the midst of

the Flood. In the manner of her deliverance the Church of Christ is typified rather by that other illustrious antediluvian, namely Enoch; for Enoch also "walked with God." And "by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death" (Heb. 11:5). He was removed from the earth before the Flood came. And this blessed experience is to be repeated in the future upon a far larger scale. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:16-18). It will be worth while to be preserved, like Noah, in the midst of the approaching overwhelming judgments, but more blessed still to be translated without seeing death, like Enoch. Yet the unique experience of Enoch will be enjoyed only by those who have been well-pleasing unto God. Enoch had assurance of this before he was translated (Heb. 11:5). *The Enoch type of life is a life of fellowship and of faith. We must believe God now, and walk with God here, in order to be counted worthy to escape death and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air when He returns for His waiting Church.*

III

The Babel Crisis

THE BABEL CRISIS

1. Failure of the Mosaic Dispensation.
2. Human Nature Unchanged by the Flood.
3. The Babel Rebellion.
4. The Babel Judgment.
5. Satan Unmentioned.
6. Were the Babelites Forewarned?
7. The Extent of the Dispersion.
8. The Abandonment of the Race Not Final.
9. Will Babylon Again Be Destroyed?

THE BABEL CRISIS

THE Noahic Dispensation was ushered in with the solemn ceremony of building an altar unto Jehovah for the offering of burnt sacrifices of every clean beast and bird (Gen. 8:20). Thus the religion of Jehovah was immediately reëstablished in the earth. In the preceding age religion had ceased to be a power in men's lives. Their knowledge of evil had triumphed over their knowledge of good. Conscience proved to be too weak a sovereign for the regaining of the lost Paradise. But with the new dispensation God introduced a new commandment to check the progress of sin. Man was now to be tested under conscience *plus* a limited form of human government. Capital punishment was divinely instituted (Gen. 9:6). In the preceding age Cain, the murderer, was allowed to go free, and the result was a posterity of criminals (Gen. 4:17-24). With this new law for the elimination of crime society was reëstablished in the earth and a new dispensation began, but which speedily ran its course.

Human Nature Unchanged by the Flood

The Flood did not change the nature of man the sinner. For this something other and far different was needed than the revelation of God through His

righteous judgments. This will be seen to be especially true in the future (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21). Notwithstanding the awful judgments upon men of the future, it is said of them, "And they repented not of their works."

God had promised not again to curse the ground; neither would He again smite any more every living thing; and the order of nature would be preserved so long as the earth endured. Yet God knew what was in man and that he came through the Flood with the same corrupt nature. The evidence of this fact was soon forthcoming. Towards the end of the next chapter (Gen. 9) is recorded the sin and shame of Noah, the man who had walked with God, and also the sin and curse of Ham. With the awful results of the Flood fresh in his memory the drunkenness of Noah surprises us. Possibly he was overconfident of his position and his privileges. But Noah, new head of the race, was no stronger to resist sin than was Adam. Victories over past sins are no guarantee of freedom from present temptation and defeat. The saint may any moment go down in shame before some new assault of Satan.

But long before sin becomes a social evil it has been hidden in the heart. This God knew and revealed to Noah. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." This was after the Flood. Before society can become outwardly corrupt the individual unit of society has secretly cherished and committed sin in his imagination. Sin will not re-

main in the heart. The longer it is coddled there the stronger it will be when it bursts its chrysalis seclusion. And when society itself becomes corrupt it faces a catastrophe. God appears upon the scene in order to prevent total wreckage. Though His judgments are dire and often destructive they also are salvatory.

The Babel Rebellion

The centralization of the race in the plains of Shinar came about naturally, but quite unnatural was their fearful aspiration to build a city and a tower which should prevent their disruption and scatterment. By their own ingenuity and united effort they would prevent such a disaster: "And they said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4).

We have here evidences of an organized political and religious revolt against God. Consolidation was considered of prime importance. Divisions probably had already come and the people were fearful of even greater schisms. Sin always entails enstrangement and separation. Irreligion and idolatry doubtless were prevalent. Indeed the great Tower of Babel is thought to have been a huge temple for idolatrous worship, pyramidal in shape, outrivaling the largest of the pyramids in Egypt. If this be true there was a wide departure from the simple altar worship instituted by Noah. But if the unity of the true faith had been

lost, it was vain to strive to preserve an ungodly unity by however ingenious methods. The titanic attempt to preserve the solidarity of the race and to defy heaven was doomed to failure from the start. There can never be an essential unity among men that does not center in God. Any other is a challenge to God, a challenge which He will not be slow to accept when the crisis comes. In the case of Babel that crisis came when the ungodly men of that worldly city were busily and apparently successfully carrying out their proud plans of making a name for themselves. Self-glorification, rather than the glory of God, was their avowed ambition. This is the master sin. There is none greater. And when the entire race became imbued with the spirit of self-exaltation the time was ripe for God to interpose, lest His own name be forgotten and the entire race worship and serve the creature instead of the Creator. Such a rebellion God could not permit to succeed.

The Descent of God and the Babel Judgment

God beheld from heaven and was alarmed for His cause. This was no petty revolt, but an open rebellion. It was defiance of God, and He considered it so ominous that He made a personal reconnoiter of the situation. "And Jehovah *came down* to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded" (Gen. 11:5).

That was no mean race. For men of modern achievements to despise the ancients is sadly to un-

derrate their capacity and skill. Even God did not despise the ability of the postdiluvian architects and city builders. His verdict was, "And now nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do." However vaulted their ambitious schemes they would carry them out. There was just one thing to be done. Divine interposition must be resorted to. This decision was quickly reached, and the simplicity and ease with which the Babel rebellion was ended is amazing.

God said, "Come, LET US GO DOWN, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (Gen. 11:7). This was the first step in the judgment. Their "one language" was not being put to a good use. A universal language may help to hasten either the development or the deterioration of mankind. Without the hindrance of diverse languages either good or evil is quickly disseminated. Upon the wings of a common speech sin may fly quite as swiftly as salvation. A universal language is not an unmixed good. In the case of the postdiluvians evil made rapid progress and culminated in open rebellion against God. Therefore God checked the progress of sin by simply confounding their language.

The Dispersion

The second step in this Divine judgment was to break up the common home of the race and scatter the once united family (v. 8). This might have fol-

lowed naturally and logically the strife occasioned by the confusion of the tongues, but is attributed to the direct judgment of God. Their own awesome dread of their fate was a prophecy of its accomplishment. God could not send another Flood to destroy those reprobates, for He had covenanted with the race not to do so. Hence their judgment was not destruction, *but dispersion.* By thus miraculously interfering with this vain attempt of men to securely establish themselves beyond the reach of internal discension and outward disaster, God sought to check the course of sin. Through antagonism to each other and separation, cooperation in sin would be partially avoided.

A Lesson of Warning

The lesson is one for our own instruction. Again we see the world moving towards unification. Barriers of language and custom are giving way before the triumphs of modern methods of communication and dissemination of knowledge. But any unification or consolidation of the world that does not eliminate sin and include the worship of the true God is doomed to failure. The disintegrating power of sin would of itself be sufficient to accomplish this. But when that unification becomes blasphemous the descent of God for judgment will be repeated. God again will come down to the earth and interfere with the course of the world and judge those who glory in self-achievements and ambitious projects for the perpetuation of the present order of things. The consequences of

that coming descent will be most fearful, "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

Abandoned by God

Another step in the Babel judgment is not recorded in Genesis. There may be something worse for the race than extinction. Instead of this God's method of punishment was simply *abandonment to their own evil ways.* Paul has preserved this record of God's dealings with that idolatrous world. When men became vain in their reasonings and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for various forms of idolatry, "God gave them up in the lusts of their heart unto uncleanness"; "God gave them up unto vile passions"; "God gave them up unto a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). The loathsome moral condition of Sodom and Gomorrah is a miniature picture of the debasing corruption that followed the race when thus abandoned by God. Man is dependent upon God. Separation from His fellowship is as blighting as the withholding of the rains of heaven from the tender shoots of spring. Almost anything is better than abandonment by God. That condition is worse then hopeless. It is a living death.

Satan Again Unmentioned

In the brief account of this epochal crisis we have no mention of Satan. But every attempt to be independent of God, every doubt of His goodness, every self-glorification, every act of rebellion, is of the Devil. To him we must credit such a blasphemous ambition as would build a tower that would reach to heaven. Such a spirit of confidence in self, and the desire for the glorification of self, could come only from Satan. It was apparently an anti-God attempt to establish self-worship. The Babelites had no spirit of "Thine is the power, and the glory, forever." Instead, it was "And let us make us a name." This is the spirit of the one in Isaiah who says, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: * * * * I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." Such is the ambitious and rebellious spirit of Satan.

Were the Babelites Forewarned?

Whether or not the citizens of Babel were forewarned of the coming judgment the record does not state. That they had such a knowledge is intimated in their statement of their purpose to build a city and a tower "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." This fear may have been due to disobedience of the command given to Noah and his sons: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." But if God did not forewarn them of

the coming dispersion it was contrary to His custom as already revealed in the two preceding epochal periods. Before Adam and Eve sinned God had pronounced their doom. They knew beforehand the consequence. And before the Flood came the world had ample forewarning. So it is not improbable that the Babelites knew of a coming dispersion and sought through their mighty city and heaven-topping tower to escape the threatened judgment. This attempt to defy God was disastrous. It simply hastened the evil day Their fear was a prophecy of their doom. It is not for man to defy God, but to worship Him.

The Extent of the Dispersion

The geographical extent either of the Flood or of the Dispersion is out of the province of this discussion. But as the results of the Edenic judgments were race-wide, so also were the results of the Flood and the Dispersion. The entire race is included in the statement, "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." They were not dwelling in all the earth, for the next verse (Gen. 11:2) speaks of their centralization in one particular portion of the earth. But the extent of the judgment seems to include the earth in its intent: "So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth." In each of the great epochal crises *God's dealings are with the entire race,* either as a whole or representatively. This is one of the common characteristics of these unparalleled upheavals of history, in which we

are given new revelations of both the wrath and the mercy of God.

The Abandonment of the Race not Final

Out of that idolatrous, apostate, and abandoned race God called Abraham. And the calling out of Abraham was a *merciful provision for the entire race.* Amidst the babel of voices resulting from the confusion of tongues men no longer heard the voice of God. Therefore God soon centered His dealings with the race upon a single individual, separating him from his fellows in order to better acquaint him with Himself. Whenever God has a message for the world He does not speak it to the world in the mass, but first to the one whose ear has been attuned to the voice of God in the secret place. So God made a friend of Abraham in order to show Himself friendly towards the race. This is the meaning of the promise, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). The call of Abraham unto separation to God was a call that finally should include the entire race, and all nations shall yet come and worship before Him. God did not utterly cast off the nations in the separation of Abraham to Himself, but planned that they should eventually be sharers in the Abrahamic covenant. Thus in this epochal period, although God descended in judgment upon men, He also had in mind to bless the race which He had thus judged. The rebelliousness of man was punished, but with a view to future blessing.

Will Babylon Again Be Destroyed?

Babel, or Babylon, seat of idolatry and of the first open rebellion against God, will again come up for remembrance before God, "And Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath" (Rev. 16:19). That great world-city is a type of the civilization that is displeasing to God. Cultured and sensual, exalted in its own eyes, and godless, Babylon is the acme and the glory of those who would defy the God of heaven. Babylon of the Apocalypse is "the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18). It symbolizes the arts and crafts, commerce, false religion, politics, luxuries, pleasures and corruptions of the earth. It stands for human greatness and achievement *with God left out.*

That "great city" may, however, be more than a mere symbol. It is not improbable that another Babylon shall suddenly arise upon the site of ancient Babel. The plains of Shinar are again to be populous and prosperous. The "world's granary" is to be re-opened. The three greatest nations of Europe—Russia, Germany, and England, are eagerly scheming to get control of the valley of the Euphrates. Already it is planned to open up the ancient canals and to build railroads. Foreign capital is being invested. Jewish money in particular is being expended. When once the country is fully opened and life and investments fully safeguarded, marvelous changes will speedily follow.

A great city will become a necessity. It is not impossible that it may be rebuilt, and then destroyed forever! "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great." "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." "And a strong angel took up a stone, as it were a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a great fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and SHALL BE FOUND NO MORE AT ALL." Revelation, in the eighteenth chapter, gives in detail the doom of that mystical Babylon of the future which shall assume to exalt herself and to perpetuate her corrupt influence over the nations of the earth. Wanton and godless, she shall be utterly demolished. God's ideal city is the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, and type of all that is good, as Babylon is type of all that is evil.

IV

The Egypt Crisis

THE EGYPT CRISIS

1. Precipitated by the Cry of Israel for Help.
2. Moral Condition of the World.
3. The Dread Severity of the Plagues.
4. The Plagues Typical of Future Judgments.
5. The Plagues as a Conflict with Satan.
6. Egypt as a Representative Nation.
7. Pharaoh as a Type.
8. Exhibitions of Mercy.
9. The Time Element.
10. Due Only to the Supernatural Intervention of God.

THE EGYPT CRISIS

GOD covenanted with Abraham to make of him a great nation. But this promise showed no evidence of realization until the deliverance of the Israelites out of the power of the Egyptians. The history of Abraham and his family for over four hundred years preceded the creation of the promised nation. During this period man was tested under a covenant of grace. While down in Egypt Abraham's descendants seemed to have lost faith in the Promised Seed. Individuals of the family doubtless lived under the Abrahamic covenant, but as a whole the descendants of Abraham departed from the God of Abraham and for punishment were reduced to slavery.

God Comes Down to the Earth

In the solitude of the wilderness of Horeb Moses saw a strange sight. A bush was aflame, but though it burned and blazed it was not consumed. This wonder decided Moses to turn aside to investigate. It truly was a miracle. But Moses was to experience a thing still more wonderful. As he drew nigh he was arrested by a voice out of the midst of the flaming bush. This was wierd and startling; but more marvelous than the voice was the Person to whom the

voice belonged. For "*God* called unto him out of the midst of the bush." And when Moses knew who spoke unto him, he "hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God." Moses was reverent. Moses was worshipful. The God of whom he had heard, of whom he had been taught from infancy, to whom he had prayed, with whom he had had spiritual fellowship, was now present and was visibly manifesting His presence. What else could Moses do but bow down before Him?

God's own explanation of His presence there in the wilderness of Horeb is what now concerns us: "And Jehovah said, I surely have seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and *I am come down* to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey."

"I AM COME DOWN." Another acute condition had arisen—a world-crisis. It became necessary for God to appear in person upon the scene. Forty years before Moses had aspired to deliver his people, but he was rejected. The time was not ripe. But now, out of their distress and affliction, the people were crying unto God. There was no other recourse, no other deliverer.

"I AM COME DOWN TO DELIVER." This is the explanation of the calling and commissioning of Moses, and also the explanation of all the judgments upon

Egypt, and of the mercies shown to the Israelites. *The descent of God to the earth was the chief event in the Egypt crisis, the real explanation of all the other great crises.*

Moral Condition of the World

The moral condition of the world at the close of the Abrahamic Dispensation was deplorable. In the land of Palestine the iniquity of the Amorite became fullgrown (Gen. 15:16). According to the Divine portrayal in Leviticus, chapter 18, the nations were defiled, and the land abhorrently "vomiteth out her inhabitants." The chosen people were warned against its repulsive abominations. As for Egypt—civilized, cultured Egypt—it was wholly given over to idolatrous pantheism and superstitious practices. Even the Israelites inclined towards idolatry, if we may judge from the demand they made upon Aaron for gods who should go before them (Ex. 32:1). The Golden Calf incident was at least a partial reverting to the worship to which they had grown accustomed while in Egypt. The moral condition of the world was such that the time had come for God again to intervene in the course of history in order to purify its foul current and to divert it into a new channel. Again, as in the cases of Noah and of Abraham, there must be a separation of the Chosen Seed from the rest of the world in order to preserve and perpetuate the worship of the true God. Another failure on the part of man was met by another trial upon the part of God.

The Dread Severity of Plagues

So familiar is the story of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage that it is needless to retell it. From the moment when God revealed Himself to Moses in the Burning Bush, up to the drowning of the Egyptian hosts in the Red Sea, we are in the presence of the supernatural. All of those miracles of judgment probably had a natural basis; but the unusual severity, and the time and place of the judgments, portray the supernatural presence of God in purifying judgment.

A fresh glimpse of the character and severity of these judgments will help us to understand the yet more appalling character of those in the Apocalypse. The first four plagues chiefly affected the comfort of the people. In them there was no loss of property or of life, save the fishes in the bloody waters. But it was the foulness and stench that were most objectionable to the people; and it was the personal discomfort of the plagues of the frogs, and of the lice, and of the flies, that the record makes specially prominent.

When, however, we come to the remaining series there is acute suffering of beast and of man, and actual loss of property and life. The murrain destroyed the cattle of the Egyptians; the boils afflicted even the magicians, "who could not stand before Moses because of the boils"; the hail destroyed herbage, cattle, and servants who were in the fields, compelling proud Pharaoh to quail and to confess his sin.

So severe and sweeping were these plagues that Pharaoh's servants came and besought him to grant the request of Moses, since "Egypt is destroyed."

Driven out from the presence of Pharaoh, Moses sent the locusts, which covered the land and ate all green things, whether of herb or tree. Then swiftly followed the awful darkness that lay like a pall over the land for three days, arresting all activities and imprisoning each person in his place. But the last plague was the most fearful of all, when at midnight the mysterious Angel of the Lord smote all the first-born of the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat upon his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon. Not a home in which was not one dead. Awful was the cry in Egypt that night!

Pharaoh finally yielded and granted all the demands of Moses. The Israelites were urged to depart from Egypt in haste and laden with gifts. The plagues were over, and the judgments might have ended but for the fickleness and foolhardiness of Pharaoh and his people in pursuing the Israelites, which led to the overthrow of their hosts in the Red Sea. Despoiled, desolated, and impoverished, without cattle, crops, slaves or army, Egypt did not recuperate from these just judgments of God for many years.

The Plagues Typical of Future Judgments

Merely as astonishing facts of history these judgments of God will ever be full of interest. But that

interest is greatly enhanced when we think of those dire events as typical of others still more dire and widespread, as described in the Apocalypse. The plagues by which God judged the Egyptians portray the world's judgments as set forth in the Seals, and the Trumpets, and the Bowls of Wrath. For in them, also, we have rivers and fountains turned to blood, frog-like spirits, grievous sores, thunders, fire and hail, strange locusts from the Abyss, dense darkness, the sea mingled with fire; and in addition, sword and famine and pestilence and earthquake—judgments from evil men and beasts, and judgments from above and from beneath. Knowing the effects of the Ten Plagues upon the land and people of Egypt, we are able to forecast the overwhelming disasters when God's judgments shall be in all the earth in the approaching crisis.

The Plagues as a Conflict with Satan

We shall fail of a clear apprehension of the Egypt crisis unless we perceive that these judgments were not simply to afflict the Egyptians, but were also directed against Satan and the gods whom the Egyptians worshiped. "And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments" (Ex. 12:12). Each plague was a mocking of some one of their gods. One after another the various deities who presided over the sacred Nile, and over the insects, the animals, the air, and the sun, were shown to be inferior to Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews. The

Egyptian magicians could do wonders which astonished the people, but they soon were baffled and defeated before Moses and Aaron, the representatives of God. Satan's representatives, at the end of our own dispensation will also be able to work astonishing miracles, so as to almost deceive even the elect (Matt. 24:24), and *will* succeed in deceiving the remainder of the world (Rev. 13:13, 14). Finally Satan himself will enter into the struggle. He and his angels, cast out of heaven by Michael and his angels, will personally direct the conflict. But they will meet a deadly defeat at the hands of Christ Himself (Rev. 12:7-17; 19:19).

Egypt a Representative Nation

In the preceding crises God dealt with the race, but here His dealings were with the representative nation of the earth. All of the nations had lost the knowledge of the true God. Through these judgments God would again teach men to honor Him.

First of all, He makes Himself known to Moses by His name Jehovah—a name to be feared and reverenced. The Israelites were to be His chosen people, and through their marvelous deliverance they would "know that I am Jehovah your God" (Ex. 6:7); and by these same judgments God sought to reveal Himself to the Egyptians: "And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them" (Ex. 7:5). Again at the Red

Sea God declared, "And I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah" (Ex. 14:4). To Pharaoh the message was sent, "Thus saith Jehovah, In this thou shalt know that I am Jehovah" (Ex. 7:17). When Pharaoh entreated Moses to ask that the plague of frogs be ended, Moses said, "Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto Jehovah our God" (Ex. 8:10). The land of Goshen was set apart "to the end that thou mayest know that I am Jehovah IN THE MIDST OF THE EARTH" (Ex. 8:22). Again, "For I will this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that THERE IS NONE LIKE ME IN ALL THE EARTH" (Ex. 9:14).

Especially is the representative character of Egypt manifest in the fact that the nation was not totally destroyed. Egypt was intended for an *object lesson* to the rest of the world. God puts it this way: "But in very deed for this cause I have made thee to stand, to show thee my power, AND THAT MY NAME MAY BE DECLARED THROUGHOUT ALL THE EARTH" (Ex. 9:15, 16). Egypt stood as the representative of all the apostate nations, which alike merited judgment upon their idolatrous worship.

In thus redeeming and separating Israel, the firstborn nation, through the terrors of judgment may we not foresee the time when all nations shall acknowledge God to be "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). But this shall come to pass not simply through

the present preaching of the Gospel, but finally through the punitive and devastating judgments of God.

Pharaoh as a Type

In Pharaoh, we have a type of the coming oppressor, the representative of Satan, at the culmination of the present struggle between the forces of good and evil. Like Pharaoh, the coming representative of Satan will persecute the people of God, especially the Jews (Rev. 12:17; 13:7). He will mock and defy the God of heaven, as Pharaoh did repeatedly. He will blaspheme God, aspire to the world's worship, and will insist upon putting his mark upon all who will not serve him. His bondage will be worse than that of Egypt. None will escape him save those who have been "written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain" (Rev. 13:8). These shall "come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. 15:2-4).

Exhibitions of Mercy

Although each of the epochal periods is a judgment period and manifests the wrath of God against sinners, yet each also contains revelations of His wondrous love and mercy. By reason of the Plagues the land of Egypt was laid in ruins and the people themselves were despoiled, sorrow-stricken, and slain. Yet God gave merciful forewarning. God always gives men all the show there is. Never does He take undue advantage because of His foreknowledge. Every judgment period has been foretold. As a rule, ample forewarning has been forthcoming in due time to escape. In the case of the Plagues all were foreannounced, save the third, sixth and ninth, which broke suddenly and unexpectedly. But with a single exception none of the forewarnings were taken advantage of. This exception was during the plague of hail. "He that feared the word of Jehovah among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: and he that regarded not the word of Jehovah left his servants and his cattle in the field" (Ex. 9:20, 21). It was the same way at the time of the Flood. A few, eight souls, believed God and were saved. But those who disbelieved made no provision for the future, lost all they had, and were themselves destroyed. Every prophecy of God's Word has had, or will have, a literal fulfillment, and is also an unfailing test of character—a savor from life unto life, and from death unto death.

But the most striking exhibitions of mercy were in connection with the preservation of God's chosen people. With all the rest of Egypt the Israelites were afflicted by the first three plagues. Thereafter there was a remarkable "distinction" made between them and the Egyptians. The land of Goshen was "set apart" and exempted. There were no swarms of flies for that section of the land. The murrain which destroyed cattle elsewhere, did not affect the cattle belonging to the Israelites. Only in the land of Goshen was there no hail. Thick darkness elsewhere, but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Death of the first-born in every house throughout the land, but not in the homes of the Hebrews. As God saved eight souls from the destruction of the Flood, so now He saved a nation. It was just as easy. And when the Day of the Lord shall come with swift destruction upon the wicked, who shall in nowise escape, God will preserve His own. The Revelation describes in particular a sealed company of the twelve tribes of Israel who shall be kept as Israel of old was kept during the Ten Plagues. There will be also a "multitude which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands * * * These are they that come out of THE GREAT TRIBULATION" (Rev. 7:9-14).

The Time Element

In the study of these epochal periods let us continually bear in mind their comparative shortness of time. Already we have noted the swiftness and brevity of the Edenic judgment. The Flood judgment required only forty days and forty nights for its execution. We do not know the extent of time occupied by the judgment of the confusion of tongues at Babel, but nothing in the nature of that judgment required an extended period. Assuming a naturalistic basis for the Ten Plagues, it has been estimated that they extended over a period of about nine months, or through one cycle of annual crops. After the description of the judgment of the waters turned to blood there is the statement, "And seven days were fulfilled, after that Jehovah had smitten the river." This is not a statement, apparently, of the abatement of the judgment, but simply indicates the time that elapsed before God sent the next judgment. How long it took for the frogs to cover the land we are not informed; but the unusualness of the phenomenon caused Pharaoh to attribute it to the hand of God, and so humbled the great monarch that he besought Moses to entreat Jehovah to remove the curse. This was done upon the morrow. The plague of the lice, and of the flies, and of the murrain, and of the boils, and of the hail, seemed to have followed each other in rapid succession, allowing only sufficient time for the full extent of each judgment to become apparent, and for Pharaoh to repent. The plague of the hail ruined only the

barley and the flax, the wheat and the spelt maturing in time for the plague of locusts, which also destroyed the fruit and ate up every green thing. The longest time to be allowed for the accomplishment of each plague probably did not exceed several weeks. The thick darkness lasted only three days, and the slaying of the first-born throughout the land was the tragedy of a single night! And although the preparation for the Red Sea judgment continued through one night, the actual destruction of army and charioteers and horsemen of Pharaoh was the work of only a few minutes.

This Crisis Due to the Supernatural Intervention of God

It is notable that the record describes each judgment as the immediate effect of supernatural power bestowed by God and exercised by Moses and Aaron. There were no exceptions to this rule. Each judgment followed immediately some action of the chosen representatives of God. This phenomenon characterizes all of the judgment periods. The events of the Apocalypse are no exception. They are not the results of the gradual unfoldings of ordinary history or of the ordinary course of nature. Each series of judgments, and each individual judgment, is directly traceable to supernatural agency. First, there is recorded a transaction in heaven, and this is followed immediately by appalling judgments upon the earth. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of an epoch

in distinction from a dispensation. These parallels between the plagues upon Egypt and the Apocalyptic judgments are here drawn in order to help us better to anticipate the brevity of the time occupied by the Apocalyptic judgments recorded by John.

Further Descents of God

The Egyptian crisis period includes also the year, or more, following the crossing of the Red Sea—a year of judgment, of mercy, and of the giving of the Law. It is not necessary to enter into these details. But one fact should be emphasized; namely, the manifested presence of God upon the earth. At the beginning of this crisis period God appeared to Moses in the burning bush on Mount Horeb and commissioned him to deliver His people and bring them to that mountain (Ex. 3:12). There at the close of the period God again manifested His presence when He entered into covenant relationship with the redeemed nation.

While God's presence had been with the people on their journey to Sinai, yet there is described a special descent of God in connection with the giving of the Law. In the third month, while Israel was encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, God called to Moses out of the mountain to receive a special message for the people (Ex. 19:3). Afterwards God explained to Moses: "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee forever" (Ex. 19:9). The words

were spoken to Moses, but the people were to see the cloud and to hear the voice.

Later still there is the command that the people sanctify themselves by the third day; "for the third day Jehovah WILL COME DOWN in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai" (Ex. 19:11). This promise was literally fulfilled: "And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire.....And Jehovah CAME DOWN upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up" (Ex. 19:18-20).

Special emphasis is given to these descents of God to the earth during the crisis periods of the past, because there is an insidious unbelief in the actual and personal return of Christ to the earth during the crisis period which we of this age are approaching, when He shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (1 Thess. 4:16).

V

The Crisis of the Cross

THE CRISIS OF THE CROSS

1. End of the Mosaic Dispensation.
2. Prophecy Literally Fulfilled.
3. An Era of the Supernatural.
4. The Moral Condition of the World.
5. Calvary Includes the World.
6. Calvary as a Judgment Scene.
7. The Second Dispersion.
8. Christ's Conflict with Satan.
9. Brevity of the Period.
10. A New Dispensation.

THE CRISIS OF THE CROSS

THE last of the five epochal periods that are past had to do with Christ's mission to the earth as its Saviour. Since this period is the most recent we naturally are the most familiar with it, but also because more of its details have been handed down to us. After an age-long trial of God's chosen people under the reign of Divine law another of those volcanic upheavals of human history burst forth, bringing to a climax the Mosaic Dispensation and introducing the Christian. From Moses to Christ there were isolated instances of Divine interposition which caused upheavals in the ordinary course of history, but they were not of sufficiently great importance to mark off great transitional periods of history. Each new dispensation begins with an entirely new order of dealings upon the part of God; and the change from the old order to the new always is epochal and revolutionary. As we review history these outstanding crises intercept our vision like series of successive mountain ranges. The dramatic events of these crucial periods are, as we have seen, the most vital and intensely interesting periods of history, because in each God is so manifestly and actively present to judge the race, and also to bless it with new and greater provisions and offers of mercy.

Prophecy Literally Fulfilled

This epochal period was more clearly prophesied and depicted than any other preceding epoch. Only the period next to come surpasses it in fulness of previous description. Throughout the Old Testament were gleams and visions of the coming Deliverer. In symbol, in type, and in prophecy He was the Hope both of Israel and of the world. This primitive hope was the common heritage of the race, but at length Israel became its custodian. Sometimes the Coming One was portrayed as the Redeemer, and sometimes as a conquerer; now as the suffering Servant, and again as the One who should rule the nations with a rod of iron. But the prophecies of the glorious King predominated over those of the suffering Saviour. Even John the Baptist, last of the Old Testament prophets, proclaimed the Messiah as the one who should baptize not alone with the Holy Spirit, but with fire. Apparently John, in prison, was perplexed because Christ had not instituted this work of judgment and immediately set up His kingdom of glory.

The Old Testament prophets were mystified concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them. The intervening dispensation of the Gospel was hidden from them. Yet the events which culminated in the judgment of the Cross were amply predicted. Matthew especially, writing for the Jews, constantly appealed to the prophets, who foretold His virgin birth, named the town of His birth,

described His personal appearance, His miracles, sorrows, rejection, crucifixion, burial, and even His resurrection. All of these prophecies were fulfilled with a *literalness of detail that is amazing,* and furnish us with a key to prophecies that are still to be fulfilled.

Yet when the time of the Redeemer's coming drew near, few men like Simeon, were "looking for the consolation of Israel," and few women like Anna the prophetess, were "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." And concerning the return of Christ for judgment, Christ asked, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Although that coming is even more fully foretold than was His first coming, there are prophecies in the New Testament which seem to indicate that to the world at large the return of Christ will be as unexpected and sudden as the Flood in the days of Noah.

An Era of the Supernatural

The epochal period of the Cross was even more marked than any of the preceding in its supernatural manifestations. Yet these were not in the nature of devastating judgments, but for the most part they revealed the mercy and the love of God. These manifestations were chiefly associated with the life of one Person, Jesus of Nazareth, the Word become flesh. The message of God to the world at this period was too vitally important to be entrusted to any merely human being. There was no Abraham or Moses

qualified, or who could be qualified, to accomplish the work now needful to be accomplished. This work was itself Divine and therefore one which only God could perform. God Himself must assume the human form in order to do for man the work that no man could do.

"I AM COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN" (John 6:38). This is the explanation of the miracles of healing, of the masterful control over the forces of nature, of casting out demons, and of raising the dead. These were the natural expressions of the presence of God in the person of Jesus Christ. These were the works which the Father gave Christ to do for the purpose of substantiating His claims to Deity and accrediting His message. The words that Christ spake were not His own, but the Father's.

But Christ Himself was the greatest miracle, the insuperable proof of the fact of the presence of God in this epochal period. He was God manifest in the flesh, and His entire career was strikingly unique. From the events associated with the announcement of His miraculous conception and birth, through all the crises of His life up to His own resurrection and ascension, we are conscious of beholding and conversing with Him of whom the apostles declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Add to these facts, in themselves surpassingly marvelous and convincing, the attestation of the Father speaking from heaven at the scenes of the Baptism and of the Transfiguration, and add also the descent of the Holy Spirit in bodily form to abide with Christ while upon earth and later

coming in pentecostal power to bear witness of Christ after He had returned to the Father, and who can honestly dispute the claims or deny the supernatural character of the Christ of God?

Other events mark this period as everywhere tinged or replete with the supernatural. That heavenly choir which sang to the shepherds upon the Judean hillside upon the morning of the Messiah's birth was wholly out of the ordinary. Upon one occasion three of the apostles caught a genuine glimpse of that glory which Christ had with the Father before the world was. Years afterwards, with this undimmed vision in mind, Peter wrote, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty * * * when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Pet. 1:16-18).

Consider also the miraculous events connected with the crucifixion, when the midday sun for three hours hid its face in shame, when the earth shuddered in agony and the graves were opened and many saints came forth, and when the veil into the Most Holy Place of the Temple was rent from top to bottom. Then followed the Resurrection itself, in which the angels had an enviable part. Theirs to announce His coming into the world as a babe, theirs to roll away the stone from the sepulchre, and theirs to announce the return to life of the body that had been so highly dignified by the Eternal Word becoming flesh.

Mysterious, too, were all the events connected with

the post-resurrection manifestations of that body—its recognizable form and yet its inexplicable appearances and disappearances, and finally its complete vanishing from sight as with outstretched hands in blessing Christ returned to the Father from whence He came. In each of the preceding epochs there were unusual manifestations of the supernatural, but in the epoch of the Cross the supernatural was all-abounding, *because God had come down to the earth to give a fuller revelation of Himself to men.*

The Moral Condition of the World

The moral condition of the world when Christ appeared was similar to that preceding the Flood, the building of Babel, and the judgments upon Egypt. It demanded Divine intervention. The polytheism of Rome was tolerant towards the introduction of innumerable gods and goddesses from the conquered heathen nations, and the empire became full of divinities. The lives of the people were filled with countless religious superstitions and immoral practices. Faith and purity had disappeared. Skepticism concerning God was an open boast even among those in the highest walks of life. Many taught that there was no future life and that suicide was the only way to end the miseries of present life. An overwhelming sense of despair seized those who were concerned but whose only hope was self-destruction. The race was an apostate race. The religious, political, social, domestic, and private life was utterly rotten. Seneca declared

that innocence had ceased to exist. The world was plunged into an abyss of depravity with no power to lift itself out.

Tried by the Divine standards of righteousness man was a total failure. Even the Mosaic law possessed no power to make men righteous, for the Jews themselves were little, if any, better than the Gentiles. Intended to be a "guide to the blind, a light to them that were in darkness," they practiced the same vices, and Paul charged that "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (Rom. 2:17-24). Truly the time was ripe for the appearance of the world's Deliverer, and "when the fullness of time came God sent forth his Son." There was no other Hope and no other Way by which God could retard the downward course of sin and reconcile the world unto Himself.

Calvary Includes the World

Attention has been called to the *racial character* of each of the epochal periods. However local the events in themselves, they are race-wide in intent. This characteristic is equally true of the period under consideration. *Calvary was a very little spot, but it embraced the world.* He who made the world and who was rejected by the world, nevertheless bore the sins of the world and became the world's Saviour. His forerunner thus proclaimed Christ when he officially inducted Him into His public ministry at the time of His baptism: "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh

away the sin of the world!" Jesus Himself was conscious of His world mission. The coming to Him of the Greeks was the precursor of the coming of all men to Him: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John 12:32). He is to be the judge of the world's dead (John 5:22). He also will judge the living nations (Matt. 25:31-46). Meanwhile His commission to His church is a world-wide commission (Matt. 28:19, 20). This commission was based upon His Divine and absolute authority in heaven and on earth. There surely can be no question that the Crisis of the Cross was a world-crisis and the most important of all that are in the past.

Calvary as a Scene of Judgment

The Cross of Christ was so evidently a manifestation of the incomparable grace of God that its judgment aspect is frequently overlooked. But no theory of the atonement is fully satisfactory which ignores its judicial features. As the Lamb of God who should bear away the sin of the world, Christ received in His own body the penalty of the world's sin. For Christ, the cross was pain of body, agony of mind, and the hiding of the Father's face. As the Second Adam, the Son of Man, and our Representative, He "bore our sins in His own body on the tree." Christ actually became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Instead of dealing at that time with the apostate world in direct and fearsome judgments, God judicially judged the world in the person of His only begotten Son. Although

Calvary was the superlative exhibition of God's love, it also was a fearful scene of Divine judgment. During the previous judgment periods God let fall His wrath upon sinners; but at this time He exhibited His love by indirectly judging men's sins through sending His Son to die in their stead (Rom. 8:3). Thus by one act He judged men's sins and also provided a Saviour from sin. By that mysterious act God showed Himself "just and also the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

Thus the Cross was both a scene of awful judgment and also of gracious salvation. It was indeed the hour in which the Son of Man should be glorified, but it was also an hour of judgment. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:23, 31). The judgment first fell upon Him, as our representative, bearing the judicial penalty of our sins; but it will also eventually fall upon Satan, "the prince of this world," through whom sin entered into the world and who is already under condemnation. For Christ the feverish pain, the pall of darkness, the separation from God. Truly was this a judgment scene! None more awful in all history.

The Second Dispersion

But judgment for others there was, also. Although the world at large went free, not so God's own chosen nation. So great was the light granted to them during the Mosaic Dispensation, and so great was their sin in crucifying the Lord of Glory, that God could not

deal with them as He dealt with the Gentile world.

The history of the Jews is both the most fascinating and the saddest. Exalted and favored as no other nation, but so perverse and so strangely and sorely punished! Christ "came to his own, but his own received him not." Jerusalem, city of the great King, knew not the hour of her visitation. Therefore Jerusalem must pay the dreadful penalty: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

Such was the judgment that Christ pronounced upon the royal city, although the execution of the penalty was delayed for a few years. But this downfall of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews among all nations was the *second dispersion*. Like that of Babel, it was on account of rebellion against God. The Jewish leaders of Christ's day declared, "We will not have this man reign over us." And again, "We have no king, but Caesar." In contrast with the professed innocence of Pilate they exclaimed, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." And still dispersed throughout the world, the Jews of to-day are paying the penalty dearly. A nation branded with the curse of God since A. D. 70, they have been persecuted, pillaged and plundered. Among the nations, yet separated from them, they are being preserved until the day when God shall regather them and bless them as a nation.

Christ's Conflict with Satan

The birth of Christ was the beginning of a series of conflicts with Satan and the powers of darkness. The first of these conflicts was when Satan used his minion King Herod in the endeavor to kill the infant Jesus by slaughtering the babes in Bethlehem. Several times was the Child's life saved by Divine revelations. The attack of Satan was renewed after the public designation of Jesus by John the Baptist as the Coming One, when the Father spake to Him out of heaven, and when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. Immediately there followed the forty days of temptation in the wilderness, which culminated in the three forms of temptation presented by Satan in person. Though defeated, Satan departed from Jesus only "for a season." Especially towards the close of Christ's earthly life did Satan renew his attacks. Once he made use of Peter. Ambitious Peter would dissuade Jesus from even thinking of the Cross, and thus brought upon himself a stinging rebuke: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Finally, the awful night preceding the crucifixion settled down about our Lord and His apostles. Already Judas had bargained to betray the Master, but during the Passover Feast and after the sop had been handed to Judas, John tells us, "then entered Satan into him." In the light of this statement the betrayer's kiss in the garden is no longer a mystery to us. But preceding this scene was the agony in Gethsemane with its sweat of blood.

Was not this the final conflict with Satan? Satan did not wish Christ to be crucified and thus accomplish His redemptive work. But in each conflict Satan was defeated by the Second Adam.

But another and a fiercer conflict still remains. The head of Satan has not yet been bruised (Gen. 3:15). During the present age the conflict continues to rage between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the Serpent; neither will it terminate until the Great Red Dragon is cast out of heaven and begins his persecution of the Symbolic Woman who gave birth to the Man-child (Rev. 12:13). This will prove to be the culmination of Satan's judgment, for the result of that conflict will be the confining of Satan in the Abyss for a thousand years, after which he will be destroyed (Rev. 20:1, 2, 10).

Brevity of the Period

So many events of far-reaching importance occurred during this epochal period that we should not forget into how short a space of time they were compressed. It is true that some thirty years were occupied in preparation for the culminating events, as in the days of Noah one hundred and twenty years were required for the building of the Ark; but we may limit the crisis of this epoch to probably less than three and a half years, beginning with the baptism of Christ and ending in His ascension. The Mosaic Dispensation, so far as God was concerned, ended at that moment of the crucifixion when the veil of the Temple was

rent in twain. This, too, was the beginning of the judgments upon the Jewish nation which culminated in the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus. But whatever be the limits assigned to this period, the time was short in comparison with the Mosaic Dispensation which preceded, and with the Gospel Dispensation which has followed. It is only the comparative shortness that I wish to emphasize, for this is true of all the epochal periods—of that which comes next in order as well as of all those that are in the past.

A New Dispensation

Before leaving the earth Christ established a new covenant and instituted a new dispensation. Upon the night preceding His crucifixion, and at the close of the last Passover Feast, Christ "took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." Thus Christ became "the mediator of a better covenant" (Heb. 8:6). Under this covenant He is our High Priest of *good things to come* (Heb. 9:11).

But this same Christ, appearing now in the presence of God for us, and having been once offered to bear the sins of many, *shall appear a second time,* apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation (Heb. 9:24-28). The inspired apostle added to our Lord's words concerning the observance of the Lord's Supper, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink

this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death *till he come.*" The Church of Christ is still observing this Memorial Feast, for Christ has not yet reappeared from the Holy of Holies. His intercessions for us before the Father are not yet completed; but in due time Christ will be manifested, and the events connected with that manifestation are described in the approaching epochal crisis, which is of vital interest to the people living in this Gospel Dispensation.

C

The Premillennial Crisis

I

The Approaching Epochal Crisis

THE APPROACHING EPOCHAL CRISIS

1. A Matter of Personal Concern.
2. Present Conditions.
3. The Value of a Divine Revelation.
4. The Testimony of Daniel and the Prophets.
5. The Testimony of Christ.
6. The Testimony of Paul.
7. The Testimony of Peter.
8. Will the Church Prevent the World's Corruption?
9. The Failure of Education.
10. Civilization Sitting Upon a Volcano.
11. The Approaching Descent of God.

THE APPROACHING EPOCHAL CRISIS

ALREADY the world has experienced five great epochal crises. The question now to be considered is, *Have we sufficient Scriptural warrant for expecting that a like period, with all its distinguishing features, will terminate the dispensation in which we are now living and introduce a new dispensation?* If such be the case, and if it can be clearly shown to the open-minded student of prophecy, we shall come to the study of that period with quickened interest. For if such a period, with all its supernatural judgments and interventions of God, should possibly be in the near future, we of this Age are not only interested to know what God has to say about it, *but we should have a profound personal concern.* We know what such periods have meant to the world in the preceding five great epochs. What then will be the outcome of that which we now are facing, if there be such an one?

Present Conditions

In these days of material progress, wide-spread culture, general education, marvelous scientific discoveries, mechanical inventions and appliances, one naturally hesitates to draw attention to the darkening picture painted for us by the inspired writers of

Scripture. Considering only the physical comforts of life we who enjoy the advantages of our occidental civilization are living upon a much higher plane than our ancestors.

Outwardly society seems greatly improved. But shall the glamour of social and industrial advantages blind our eyes to the ever increasing Sunday traffic, travel, and pleasure-seeking, to increasing corruption in politics, to the growing drink bill, to the multiplying suicides and homicides, to the blasphemous white slave traffic, to the widening chasm between rich and poor, to the rumblings and mutterings of anarchy, and to the political aspirations of godless socialism? Though peace congresses and courts of arbitration are popular just now, shall we shut our eyes to the increasing size of our *dreadnaughts* and to the ever enlarging army and navy bills the world over?

The Value of a Revelation

All of these conditions, however, may be only temporary and passing phases of our civilization. No one can know God's mind fully who depends for his knowledge upon a study of the prevailing political, social or religious conditions. In fact, nobody can be wise with respect to the future acts of God beyond God's revealed will. God's plans for the world are matters not of speculation, but of revelation. History and science, human knowledge and education, do not fit one to foretell what God is going to do. Only as we believe what He has seen fit to reveal can we

forecast the future with certainty. And is not the revelation of God this?—In spite of centuries of preaching the Gospel and of the free offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, the world that crucified Christ will continue in sin, in the enjoyment of its jocund feasts, in mockery of the warnings of God, in lightly esteeming the blood of Christ, until it suddenly faces the wrath of the Lamb during the approaching epochal crisis.

The Testimony of Daniel and the Prophets

Without going fully into the testimony of the Old Testament a glance at the *end times* in Daniel will be of special value to us. For example, it was vividly made known to Nebuchadnezzar that "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he hath made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the LATTER DAYS" (Dan. 2:28). What now especially interests us is that the wonderful image which the king saw, would itself eventually be suddenly and totally destroyed. Afterwards the "Stone that smote the image became a great rock, and filled the whole earth." The inspired interpretation of the action of the Stone is that the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed (Dan. 2:44). This result will be accomplished not gradually, but by the sudden destruction of Gentile supremacy, as symbolized by Nebuchadnezzar's great image. The entire description points to an epochal crisis in the history of the world, which occurs at the *time of the end.*

Daniel's vision of the strange and diverse Beast with its ten horns, out of which came the powerful Little Horn, also brings before us a crisis period that shall terminate this age. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan. 7:21-22). The entire seventh chapter leads up to the end of the present dispensation, and to the return of Christ to establish the Millennial kingdom.

We learn also from Daniel, chapter 8, of a Little Horn who should prosper wonderfully, destroying mighty ones and the holy people, and even stand up against the Prince of princes; "but he shall be BROKEN WITHOUT HAND." According to the Angel Gabriel, "the vision belongeth to the time of the end"—a time of war, turmoil and crisis.

The last four chapters of Daniel also contain visions of the "time of the end," from which we know that it will be a period of unparalleled trouble for Israel and the world, of wrath and indignation, of judgments and deliverances. We scarcely can study these revelations given to Daniel without being impressed that God has His plans for the world definitely determined; that despite the world's artilleries and armaments and its peace proposals, God's own kingdom will be established—not by the devices of men, but by His own supernatural intervention and power.

The many prophecies in the Old Testament con-

cerning an approaching world crisis by means of which an entirely new dispensation will be suddenly introduced and God's kingdom upon earth be established through Divine intervention and judgment, we have not the space to consider. But is it not significant that the Old Testament canon closes with the dread forecast of the coming of a day that "burneth as a furnace"? (Mal. 4:1). This "great and terrible day of the Jehovah" (v. 5) has not yet come. The prophecy was in no sense fulfilled when Christ came as the meek and lowly One. Its fulfillment can be only when He comes as the Lion of the tribe of Judah and with the fury of the wrath of the Lamb. This shall be seen later.

The Testimony of Christ

But for our knowledge of the approaching crisis we are not confined to the revelations given through the Old Testament prophets. Our Lord foretold that the time of His return would be a time of crisis. Alongside of the spread of the Gospel will be the development of evil. The purpose of Christ's return to the earth will include judgment upon an apostate race. Before His earthly kingdom can be established the earth must be thoroughly renovated. Not only must all evils in society be summarily dealt with; not only must every enemy of righteousness be destroyed; not only must all hostility to Christ be ended; but Satan and all the hosts of evil spirits must be overcome. And this renovation of the earth will have to do not

alone with men and demons, but will extend to the physical realms. The return of Christ will mark another acute stage in the world's history. It will be a time of cataclasm and catastrophe.

Christ used several parables to characterize the end of this age. Take, for example, the Parable of the Tares. The tares are "the sons of the evil one." The enemy that sowed them is the devil. *The harvest is the consummation of the age.* The tares are then gathered up and burned with fire. Through the grace of God some of the tares may perhaps change their character and become "sons of the kingdom"; but there is *no evidence whatsoever that all will do so.* That the world will be converted before Christ returns to establish His kingdom is not the teaching of Scripture. Instead of the world-field becoming weedless, the tares continue to grow side by side with the wheat until the harvest, which is the consummation of the age. Then will occur the separation of the evil from among the good, and judgment for the sons of Satan in the furnace of fire.

Similar conditions at the end of this age are pictured for us in the Parable of the Drag Net which is cast into the sea and encloses both good and bad fishes. But the bad must be separated from the good and thrown away. "So shall it be in the consummation of the age: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

These are scenes of what shall take place upon the earth. They deal with those living upon the earth at the end of the age. Personally, I question whether the Church comes into view here at all, as represented by the wheat and the good fish, but rather the saved seed who are to sow the millennial earth. The Church, as the mystical body of Christ, will have been removed from the earth prior to these judgments upon the living. Note that in these two parables the *wicked* are first separated out and burned, *leaving behind the righteous.*

This is just the opposite of the removal of the Church from the earth, as promised by Paul. The purpose of the judgment that occurs at the end of this age is renovation of the earth. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity." All of which indicates a crisis in the affairs of men *then living on the earth.*

Our Lord further graphically portrayed the approaching crisis by likening the end of this age to the end of the Antediluvian Age. "And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." Now, as then, the world is preoccupied, unconcerned, busy with its cares and its frivolities, with its businesses and its social functions, absorbed with its commerce and culture and crime, all unaware that the Day of the Lord will burst upon it.

When questioned by His disciples concerning the sign of His coming and the end of the age Christ

mentioned wars, famines and earthquakes as only the *beginning of travail* (Matt. 24:8). Following these should be tribulation, hatred, apostacy, falsity, abounding iniquity. The tribulation would be the greatest that the world should ever know. Jerusalem will be the center of this tribulation, and *immediately following* it the powers of heaven shall be shaken and the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn (Matt. 24:29-31).

These events belong to the future. Christ has never yet so come. There never has been such a tribulation followed by the personal return of Christ. This great tribulation is unquestionably the one mentioned in the Revelation, chapter 7, and characterizes the acute epochal crisis which the world is now facing.

The Testimony of Paul

When the Apostle Paul writes of the ushering in of the Day of the Lord he does not describe it as heralded by the glorious progress of the Gospel, but as coming like a thief in the night, when those of the night are asleep or drunken (1 Thess. 5:2). Again Paul says that when men in the blindness of their vanity and unbelief shall be boasting of "peace and safety," then sudden destruction cometh upon them. It will not matter whether that peace be secured by armaments or by arbitration. It will not hold. There can be no lasting peace in society and among nations so long as men are warring against God. The controversy with God must

first be settled. But from the nature of the case this controversy can not have a peaceable settlement, for men will not accept God's conditions. Therefore Paul declares that this age will end with the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven to render "vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel" (2 Thess. 1:7, 8). These two classes, the ignorant and the disobedient, probably will be in the majority when Christ returns, as they are today. This lurid picture of the Lord Jesus in flaming fire to render vengeance upon them is quite unlike the one that modern false prophets are accustomed to paint, who think only of the glorious triumphs of the Gospel and ignore its sad defeats.

Paul's vision of the closing days of this age, as given to Timothy, is a vision of perilous, or grievous, times. Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, not lovers of good, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Glorification of self, worship of mammon, gross demoralization, passion for amusement rather than devotion to God! Such is the end of the age towards which the world is madly careening, and which will culminate in the Day of Wrath and the perdition of ungodly men. When the crop of evil seeds sown in the world-field by Satan is fully matured, can it fail to precipitate a crisis?

The Testimony of Peter

Peter's vision of the end of the age does not differ from Paul's: "Knowing this first, that in the last days

mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. 3:3, 4). They will have pinned their faith to an imperfect human logic, being *willful forgetters* of past history. Peter reminds all such of the destructive flood of old and warns them of coming judgment upon the world (vv. 5-7). God's word shall not fail. The Day of the Lord will come as a thief (v. 10), taking the unready world by surprise.

Will the Church Prevent the World's Corruption

Many who are weak in the faith deny the possibility of an approaching crisis, and point to the vast uplifting influence of the Church, and claim that there are enough good people in the world to prevent its corruption. So long as the Church remained pure it was indeed "the salt of the earth," the great preservative of society. But the Church is no longer pure. The majority of its members are actuated by worldly maxims and selfish pursuits. The Church has become so much like the world that it has lost much of its influence with the world. Her days of power were her days of separation, poverty and deep piety. Taking a world-view of the spiritual condition of the Church, including the Romish, Greek and Reformation branches, may we not question whether the world has not corrupted the Church, instead of the Church having Christianized the world? But even had the Church remained pure the corruption of the world could not have been fully prevented, for the time is coming when

the Church will have been taken out of the world (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Corruption then must necessarily and speedily follow.

The Failure of Education

Our modern philanthropists are giving more to education than to any other object. Endowing schools and colleges and building libraries is quite a fad with the rich. Their panacea for the salvation of the world is education. But though education of the right sort tends to control the passions of men it does not eradicate them nor change the disposition. No criminal is so bad as an educated criminal. The illiterate men who filled our penitentiaries fifty years ago have given place to men who read and write, many of whom are college graduates. Cultured Greece was a corrupt Greece. Education is not salvation. Darkness within the soul is not dispelled by pressing an electric light button. A highly civilized world may still be a doomed world.

The civilization of today rests largely upon greed and force, instead of upon grace and faith. Through greed we are growing rich, and through force we are striving to keep our riches. The feverish haste of the nations to increase their armaments only instances their distrust of one another and their desire to get and to keep. And this spirit among the nations is inspired by the individual citizens. Bismarck was not far wrong when he said that modern European civilization was sitting upon a volcano. If living now, would he

not have included the world? Nobody knows when the volcano may become active.

The Approaching Descent of God

In these days when every event of Christ's life upon earth is being microscopically examined and criticised, and when the great facts of His earthly life are being boldly assailed and denied, we should not be surprised that a waning belief in the personal return of Christ to the earth is prevalent. We should not be surprised for this condition of unbelief was prophesied by Peter (2 Pet. 3:4). Just as the resurrection of Christ from the grave is held by some to have been only a spiritual resurrection and did not include the resurrection of His body, so also some are saying that the coming again of Christ to the earth is only a spiritual return instead of a personal and visible return.

Let us recall that each of the great Bible crisis periods of the past has been marked by the personal presence of God upon the earth. Sometimes, if not always, this presence of God was visible, as when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and also when He descended in fire upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people (Ex. 19:11, 18).

Likewise during the Premillennial crisis will be fulfilled the vision of John: "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7). Christ will come down out of heaven to the earth in visible form. John saw also in Apocalyptic vision the heaven opened and Jesus as KING OF KINGS AND LORD

OF LORDS descending in judgment to the earth (Rev. 19:11-16).

The foregoing fully harmonizes with Christ's own prophecies: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels" (Matt. 16:27). "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30). "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64).

These are but several of Christ's prophecies of His return to the earth. The Apostle Paul's very definite declaration to the Thessalonians is illuminating: "FOR THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4:16).

Slowly the crops of good and evil are ripening for the harvest which ends our own dispensation. The wheat and tares will be separated. This is not the work of men. God will supervise the harvesting. Christ will descend from heaven and direct the winnowing judgments. *This approaching descent of God to the earth creates the climax of the Premillennial crisis.*

II

The Wrath of Satan

THE WRATH OF SATAN

1. The Necessity of Having a Knowledge of Satan.
2. Satan's Enmity.
3. War in Heaven Against Satan.
4. Satan Deceiver of Men.
5. Having Great Wrath.
6. Satan's Wrath Against the Jews.
7. Satan's Wrath Against the Gentiles.
8. Satan's Chief Executioners of Wrath.
9. Satan Helped by Demons.
10. Satanic Imperialism.

THE WRATH OF SATAN

A THOROUGH understanding of the character of Satan and a knowledge of his career are necessary to a grasp of approaching events. The crass ignorance that prevails concerning the teaching of Scripture as to the origin and destiny of Satan, concerning his audacious ambitions and his wiles to achieve them, and concerning his supernatural wisdom and power, is truly appalling. Few seem to realize that Satan has an organized kingdom of spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, against which we now are warring. Not understanding these things many devout believers are being led far astray, both as to the course of this present age and as to its consummation, which latter we now are considering. Many Christians are acting as though Satan was already bound and not a present antagonist. In consequence men are deceived by his counterfeits and blandishments and hypocrisies.

Satan's Enmity

After the unveiling to the Apostle John of the events of the approaching crisis as viewed externally (Rev. 6-11), the chief actors and leading personalities in the great drama are disclosed in chapters 12 to 14 of the Apocalypse. In the twelfth chapter the prin-

cipal character is Satan. First comes the vision of the Mystical Woman travailing in birth and in pain to be delivered. This is followed by the sign of the Great Red Dragon standing before the woman in order to devour her child at the moment of birth. But the Man Child, "who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron," was caught up to the throne of God, and the Woman fled to her place of refuge in the wilderness.

We have here one of those marvelous condensations of history for which the Bible is noted. It reminds us of the opening verses of Genesis and of the Gospel according to John. The Mystical Woman probably is Israel, whom Micah represents as travailing and bringing forth Him whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting (Mic. 4:10; 5:2). And the Man Child surely is Christ, the universal King, who ascended to the right hand of the throne of God. The Blood-red Dragon, who sought the life of the Child through his minion Herod, is afterwards designated as Satan. Thus in these opening visions of the chapter Satan is prominent as the enemy of the Seed of the Woman. According to the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 this enmity will not cease until Satan's head is bruised. But since the Seed of the Woman, the Man Child, escaped the power of Satan he turned his attention to the persecution of the Woman herself. This enmity of Satan against Christ and Israel will culminate in the next epochal crisis, which will be "the time of Jacob's trouble."

War in Heaven Against Satan

The popular conception of Satan is that he is now in hell, but instead he is at the head of a kingdom in the heavenly places and has access to God. Hence the necessity of our putting on the whole armour of God (Eph. 6:12, 13). Also Paul refers to Satan as "the prince of the power of the air." The statement in Revelation 12:4 that "his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven" may possibly refer to the original apostacy of Satan and the company of angels who at that time fell with him. Anyway it intimates the vast influence of Satan on high.

But the reign of Satan in the upper air, having access both to heaven and to earth, is some day to end. Just what event will date the ejection of Satan is not clearly revealed. Possibly it may be the descent of Christ into the air for His Church (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). The glorious removal of the Church will certainly be an opportune time for Satan to attempt to firmly establish his world kingdom and to secure the world's worship.

But not without a death struggle will Satan surrender his present sway in the heavenly places. He must be forcibly ejected from his present throne. This is the task set for Michael and his angels, who shall go forth to war against the Dragon and his angels and shall overcome them. "Neither was their place found any more in heaven" (Rev. 12:8). This defeat in heaven at the hands of Michael is the prelude to Satan's final defeat upon earth at the descent of Christ Himself.

Satan, Deceiver of Men

The Blood-red Dragon who will be dethroned and cast down to the earth is designated by such names and terms that we cannot mistake who he is—"the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world." Many in these days are so badly deceived that they deny even the existence of the Devil. There are others whose minds *the god of this age* hath blinded, "that the light of good news of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." Satan, "deceiver of the whole world"! First, it was Adam and Eve, and afterwards all their descendants, save One. Christ alone recognized Satan and defeated him.

But Satan is a perfect counterfeiter. He does not pose as a scoundrel, but as a saint. He is not repulsive, but attractive. He is no atheist, but a believer in God. Paul says that "Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light." Such is not his real character, for his kingdom is a kingdom of darkness. But at the last Satan will not rely either upon personal charms or base seductions to deceive men, but rather upon the spectacular and the supernatural. Paul informs us that the coming of the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, will be "according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish" (2 Thess. 2:9, 10). By undisputed miracles will Satan at the last be aided in his quest for the world's worship and dominion. But more of this later.

Having Great Wrath

The ejection of Satan from his throne in the heavenly places *will precipitate a crisis upon the earth.* The rejoicing in heaven over the victory of Michael and his angels will be followed by a greater victory upon the earth: "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night" (Rev. 12:10). Satan is our archenemy, and the momentary rejoicing in heaven will not preclude suffering for those still upon the earth: "Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, HAVING GREAT WRATH" (12:12). Aware of the impending crisis, the terrible wrath of Satan, so long restrained, will be let loose in all its fury against the people of God, hoping to prevent the Millennial Kingdom of Christ from being established. The bloody trail of this wrath we shall now follow.

Wrath Against the Jews

The first to feel the bitterness of Satan's wrath will be the Jews. The prince of Daniel 9:26, 27 will make a "firm covenant with them for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." This week is the last of the seventy which were decreed against the Jews and the Holy City "to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up

vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" (Dan. 9:24). The breaking of the covenant, followed probably by the profaning of the sanctuary and the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate to which Daniel and Christ referred, will doubtless cause a revolt of the Jews which will precipitate their final and fiercest persecution.

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child" (Rev. 12:13). Persecution of the Jews is thus the initial step of Satan after being cast down to the earth. Jerusalem will be the center of this persecution. "And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (Rev. 11:2). Clearly apprehending what is before him Satan is especially bitter towards her from whom Christ came. But God has a place prepared for her (12:6, 14).

Wrath Against the Gentiles

Unable to destroy the woman in the wilderness Satan returns "to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17). This seems to include Gentiles as well as Jews. Not the Jews only, but they in any portion of the earth who shall refuse to obey and worship Satan; for the Beast out of the earth will have the power to "cause that as many as

should not worship the image of the first beast should be killed" (13:15). Doubtless many martyrdoms will result. Indeed the opening of the Fifth Seal reveals the "souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." Many will be victors because they "loved not their life even unto death" (Rev. 12:11).

Satan's Chief Executioners of Wrath

Satan will not be lacking in powerful agents for the carrying out of his designs and for the executing of his wrath against those who oppose him. Reference already has been made to his miracles. But two agents in human form demand our special attention. These are his political and ecclesiastical representatives. The first is the Beast coming out the sea. He is at the head of a confederacy, and upon his seven heads are names of blasphemy (13:1, 2). Thus is his character at once revealed to us, and we ought not to be startled when further informed that "the dragon gave him his power, and throne, and great authority" (v. 2). He is the chief political representative of Satan, and when the death stroke of his seventh head is healed the whole world will wonder "after the beast; and they WORSHIPPED THE DRAGON, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshipped the beast" (vv. 3, 4). Thus will Satan finally, for a brief period, secure the world's worship.

But another Beast is to come out of the earth, resembling a lamb but speaking LIKE A DRAGON (13:11).

In addition to having all of the authority of the first Beast he has also miracle-working power, by which men will be deceived. His special mission will be to make obligatory the worship of the image of the first Beast, which in reality is the worship of Satan. The only alternative will be death (13:15). Here again we see the hand of Satan, who is "a murderer from the beginning." There will be no escaping the issue, for Satan's followers will be branded plainly as such by the mystic number of the Beast (vv. 16, 17). It will be a time of fearful decision. In those days an omnious warning will be sent from heaven: "If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:9, 10). Many no doubt will heed the solemn warning and will choose Christ instead of Satan.

Satan Helped by Demons

It was the teaching of Christ that demons were a part of the kingdom of Satan (Luke 11:14-18). They are his secret agents and were especially active during the period of our Lord's earthly ministry. Though constantly at work the close of this age will be marked by their intensified activity. "And I saw coming out of the MOUTH OF THE DRAGON, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: for they are the spirits of demons, working signs" (Rev. 16:13, 14). Being sign-workers, like the False

Prophet, they are fully equipped for their baneful mission. They "go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." Their audacious mission will prove successful, and thus the closing conflict of the end of the age will be hastened. But the wrath of Satan will work his own defeat and also cause the annihilation of the allied armies.

Satanic Imperialism

Satan's ambition to be the recognized sovereign of the world is to have a brief realization. In the person of his representative he is to obtain "authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation" (Rev. 13:7). This dominion was what Satan once offered to Christ in return for His worship. It was no idle offer. Finally the monster will be found who will wholly surrender himself and become an incarnation of Satan. Then, with a wisdom unmatched by that of any mere man, and under the personal direction of Satan, an imperialism will be established that shall embrace the world. But it will be established only through wrath and force and bloodshed. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (v. 7). None shall be able to withstand him.

But while Satan for a short period is to dominate the worship and the politics of the world, some think this is especially true of the territory embraced under the imperialism of ancient Rome. However this may

be we are given another vision of the Beast from the sea in chapter 17 of the Apocalypse. This time he is a "scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns," which identify him with the Dragon (12:3). This Beast "was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition" (17:8), and is thus identified also with the Beast of chapter 13, whose "death stroke was healed." After his resurrection, and during the supernatural period of his reign, the ten horns receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. These have one mind, and they give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished (17:13-17). But these same kings shall later become instruments of wrath against the Woman who rides the Beast, and will accomplish her destruction (v. 16). But in so doing they go contrary to their own character, for "God did put in their hearts to do his mind." They will become a boomerang for Satan, for thus will "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," be destroyed (17:5, 18). Thus the wrath of Satan will be compelled to aid in accomplishing the wrath of God.

Summary

We have seen that the wrath of Satan against men will be fearful in its workings. Though limited to only a brief period of time, such is his power, so crafty is he, so efficient his agents, both men and

demons, that the terrors which result are appalling to consider. Ambitious to be equal to God, covetous of this world as his usurped realm, Satan will use his supernatural power to perpetuate his kingdom among men. The entire account of the execution of Satan's wrath impresses us with an overwhelming sense of the folly of resistance. At the present time by wiles and fair promises he entices and ensnares men. But when cast down from heaven to earth during the approaching crisis, knowing that his days are numbered, he will throw off all disguise and give full sway to the fury of his wrath in the vain attempt to retain the sceptre of the world. They in heaven know what this will mean to the inhabitants of the earth and shout their warning cry of "Woe for the earth and for the sea."

III

The Wrath of the Lamb

THE WRATH OF THE LAMB

1. The Prophecies of John the Baptist Will Be Fulfilled.
2. Christ's Twofold Mission.
3. The Day of Wrath.
4. Paul Upon the Wrath of God.
5. The Lamb's Wrath as Revealed to John.
6. Repetition of Judgment Scenes.
7. Physical Agencies of the Lamb's Wrath.
8. Angels as Agents of Christ's Wrath.
9. The Two Witnesses.
10. The Locusts from the Abyss.
11. The Euphratean Army.
12. The Personal Execution of the Lamb's Wrath.
13. Some Results.
14. Defense of the Wrath of the Lamb.

THE WRATH OF THE LAMB

WHEN John the Baptist, last of the Old Testament prophets, sought to prepare the way for the coming of Christ he unsparingly proclaimed, "Ye offspring of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the WRATH TO COME?" His message was solely a call to repentance in view of the coming of One "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will garner his wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." In company with all of his predecessors John the Baptist failed to clearly foresee that the Christ must suffer before He should reign. The present Day of Grace also was hidden from their eyes and not revealed until the time of Paul (Eph. 3:1-5). Yet John the Baptist was not mistaken as to the fact that Christ was to come in judgment. His prediction of the work of Christ was true, but not exhaustive. The only thing not clear was the *time* when that judgment should take place. But we know the time, for Christ designated it to be the harvest time, which is the end of the age (Matt. 13:39, 40). At that season the prophecy of John the Baptist will come true.

Christ's Twofold Mission

Christ endeavored to establish His earthly kingdom

by peaceable methods. By preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, by healing the sick and making men physically whole, by raising the dead, by casting out demons, by doing all manner of wonderful works, He sought to win the sinning nation to Himself. He proclaimed the "acceptable year of the Lord," but the Jewish nation failed to recognize the day of their visitation. When Christ claimed that His ministry was the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:2 He stopped at a comma. Why did He not quote the entire verse? Because His peaceable mission of mercy was in no sense "the day of vengeance of our God." This is what seems to have perplexed John while in prison. Why was not Christ doing the work that John had predicted? Why did He not at once establish His earthly kingdom by the use of force? This He will need to do, for the Day of Vengeance will surely come. In that day His garments will be dyed in blood, but *not His own.* When inquired of concerning this He replied, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with me: yea, I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (Isa. 63:3, 4). That this prophecy is to have its fulfillment we learn from Revelation 19: 13-15, which passage ends with the words, "and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty."

The Day of Wrath

We are now further to consider this Day of Vengeance, or Day of Wrath. We shall see that it is an earthly judgment, or series of judgments, and of brief duration. It is not distinct from The Great Tribulation, but rather includes it. The Gospel Age will end in glory, but a glory due not alone to the gradual spread of the Gospel. Christ will return, but His coming will be signalized by wrath as well as mercy. The Second Psalm tells us that when the time comes to establish the earthly kingdom of Christ God will speak to the rebellious nations *in His wrath.* The entire 110th Psalm, which is strikingly Messianic and descriptive of the King's reign, mentions the time when the Lord "will strike through kings IN THE DAY OF HIS WRATH." Elsewhere in the Old Testament we have many details of that dread day. Take, for example, a single verse from Isaiah (13:13): "Therefore I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place, in the wrath of Jehovah of hosts, and IN THE DAY OF HIS FIERCE ANGER." An examination of the diagram on the following page, setting forth the Day of Wrath as described in the Apocalypse, may help to a clearer comprehension of the wrath of the Lamb as given in prophetic visions.

Paul upon the Wrath of God

Although Paul greatly emphasized the grace and mercy of God, he also had much to say about the

THE REVELATION OF THE WRATH OF GOD. Revelation, chs. 4-19

Seals	1st Conquest	2nd Anarchy	3rd Famine	4th Death and Hades	5th Martyr Souls	6th "The Wrath of the Lamb" "The Great Day of their Wrath"	Episode Tribulation Victors	7th Fire cast upon the earth Lightning, voices, etc
Trumpets	1st Hail and Fire Mingled with Blood	2nd Mountain Burning with Fire	3rd Wormwood	4th Sun, Moon and Stars Darkened	5th Locusts from the Pit of the Abyss	6th The Strange Euphratean Army	Episode Mighty Angel The Two Witnesses and their Plagues	7th Third Woe Trumpet Lightnings, thunders, etc. **"And thy wrath came"**
Chief Actors	Michael War in Heaven	Satan Cast down to the Earth, "having great wrath"	Beast out of the Sea Satan's Political Agent Worshipped World-wide Imperialism	The False Prophet Miracle Worker Compulsory worship of the First Beast	The Lamb Upon Mount Zion	"The hour of his judgment is come" (14:7) Fall of Babylon	"The wine of the wrath of God" (14:10) "The winepress, the great, of the wrath of God" (14:19)	
Bowls of Wrath	Prologue (15:1-16:1) "In them is finished the wrath of God" "Bowls full of the wrath of God" "Pour out the bowls of the wrath of God"	1st Grievous Sores	2nd Death In the Sea	3rd Blood to Drink	4th Men Scorched by the Sun	5th Darkness, Pain and Sores	6th Euphrates Dried Up	Episode Men Gathered for the Battle of Har-Magedon	7th Lightnings, Voices, etc. "The cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (16:19)
Supplemental Details	"I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot" (17:1)		"And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty" (19:15)				Destruction of the Kings of the earth and their armies Beast and False Prophet cast into the Lake of Fire Satan Bound	

wrath of God. Not only did he preach the revelation of the righteousness of God for such as would be saved, but also the revelation of the wrath of God against the ungodly and the unrighteous (Rom. 1:18). Through the exercise of His goodness God would save men; but for the impenitent there is "wrath in *the day of wrath* and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5). For some there is eternal life; but for those who obey not the truth shall be "wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish" (vv. 8, 9). Writing to the Ephesians Paul teaches that we all are "by nature children of wrath" (2:3). Only in Christ can we become children of God and escape the execution of His righteous wrath. And Paul praised the Christians at Thessalonica because they were waiting the Son from heaven, "even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." In the same epistle he makes special mention of God's wrath against the Jews (1 Thess. 2:16).

But the period depicted as the Day of Wrath, which is chiefly for the living, will be signalized by the personal return of Christ. Paul regarded this event as a possibility in his own day, and it has been a possibility in every generation since. In his second letter to the Thessalonians he writes, "And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (1:7, 8). This execution of "eternal

destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come" (vv. 9, 10), helps us to locate the Day of Wrath. Its proper sphere is this sin-cursed earth. Still rebellious and disobedient it awaits its awful doom from the coming Christ.

The Lamb's Wrath as Revealed to John

In his Gospel John presents Jesus as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." But when the Day of Salvation has ended an entirely different view of Christ in relation to the world is given by John: "And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, AND FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15-17).

This dread Day of Wrath also is described under each of the other series of judgments in the Apocalypse; and each reference is to the closing scenes of this age and the introduction of the next. Under the Seventh Trumpet the Four and Twenty Elders give thanks unto the Lord God because the "nations were wroth and THY WRATH CAME." In the fourteenth chapter, when the Lamb is seen standing on the mount Zion, the angel with the eternal good tidings to pro-

claim announces with a great voice to them that dwell on the earth, "Fear God, and give him glory; FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME." And a third angel proclaims the doom of any would-be follower of the Antichrist, with the words, "He also shall drink of THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF GOD, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger." This same chapter closes with the reaping of the earth's harvest and the gathering of the earth's vintage. Each is a scene belonging to the closing days of the age. The angel that gathered the vintage of the earth "cast it into THE WINEPRESS, THE GREAT, OF THE WRATH OF GOD."

The fifteenth chapter opens with a sign in heaven, "great and marvelous, seven angels having seven plagues, the last, for in them is FINISHED THE WRATH OF GOD." These seven angels are given "seven golden bowls FULL OF THE WRATH OF GOD." They are then commanded, "Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth" (16:1). The earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, the throne of the Beast, the Euphrates, and the air, are all affected and sorely afflicted by these dire judgments of God, and special mention is also made of her who seduced all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (14:8): "And Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, TO GIVE HER THE CUP OF THE WINE OF THE FIERCENESS OF HIS WRATH" (16:19).

Repetition of the Judgment Scenes

Just here it may be well to call attention to the parallelism between the different judgment series of the Apocalypse. For example, the plagues just referred to are said to be the last, but in chapters 17, 18 and 19 there are other judgment scenes. Also some of the events contained in the Seven Bowls of Wrath were already referred to in the preceding visions. When we take up the *time element* in the approaching crisis we shall see that these series of judgment refer not to different events, separated by long intervals of time, but that all of these descriptions of the wrath of God would seem to refer to a single period of time, namely, the close of this age, when Christ returns for judgment.

The Physical Agencies of the Wrath of the Lamb

The opening of the Sixth Seal graphically portrays astounding disturbances both in the earth and the heaven: "And there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

Our Lord Himself said that preceding His return "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall

not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken." We are reminded of the warning and prophecy quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven" (12:26). Also in the Trumpets and Vials of Wrath mention is made of hail and fire, of thunders and lightnings, of intensified heat of the sun, followed by the darkening of sun, moon and stars, of waters turned to blood, and of unparalleled earthquakes. Is it any wonder that men's hearts will fail them? Or that in their frenzy they should not recognize the futility of crawling into the caves and holes of the quaking earth? The terrors of the great Day of God's wrath have taken hold upon them, and they cry out, "Who is able to stand?"

Angels as Agents of Christ's Wrath

The Lamb in His wrath will make use not alone of the elements and forces of nature, as variously and vividly portrayed in the Scripture. Angels will have an important part to play. In connection with the Trumpets and the Vials theirs is the leading part. They first come prominently into view in the sounding of the Seven Trumpets by the seven angels that stand before God (Rev. 8:2). And these judgment trumpets are preceded by *another* angel, with a golden censer. This he filled with fire from the altar and cast the fire upon the earth; "and there followed

thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake." But especially do we see the prominence of the part taken by angels in connection with the seven last plagues as described in chapters 15 and 16. These are simply illustrations. Throughout the Apocalypse the part assigned to the angels is a prominent one. Thus we see that the angels may not only act as ministering spirits to those who shall inherit salvation, but also become active agents in administering the wrath of God towards the rejecters of salvation.

The Two Witnesses

But God has other unusual agents for the accomplishing His wrath. Take, for example, the Two Witnesses of the eleventh chapter of the Revelation. They shall have power to dry up the clouds, power to turn water into blood, power to smite the earth with plagues, not once only, but "as often as they shall desire." This may be only locally. But not until they have finished their testimony shall the Beast that comes out of the Abyss have power to kill them.

The Locusts from the Abyss

By far the wierdest agencies of the wrath of the Lamb are described under the judgments of the first and second Woe Trumpets (chapter 9). The star from heaven is probably another angel, to whom is given the commission to open the pit of the Abyss. Many strange and absurd interpretations have been given to the singular swarm of locusts that issues from

the Abyss. But in vain do we go beyond the revealed word. Real locusts are described; but so unlike any others are they, and their work so unusual, that it is not surprising that we should be puzzled over them. They care not for green grass or herbage, like ordinary locusts, but are a scourge of men—yet only of those who have not the seal of God on their foreheads. Neither have they power to kill men, but only to torment, "as the torment of a scorpion." They are armored and arrayed for battle, and they have a king over them, "the angel of the abyss." This suggests that they may be, as some think, infernal intelligences in the shape of strange locusts, unknown and unlisted in any of the entomological books of the day. Their power is limited to only five months; but so fiendish are their torments that during their reign men will prefer to die than to live, yet can not. Even the door of suicide seems closed to them.

The Euphratean Army

The second Woe Trumpet describes an army totally unlike any that ever as yet has marched into battle. Certainly for size no other can be compared to it. Then, too, the fighting seems to be done by the horses instead of their riders; for men are killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke, and brimstone, which proceed out of the mouths of the horses. Their tails also have power to hurt men, for their tails are as the tails of serpents, and have heads. They kill the third part of men and probably torture others. Surely we do

not have here any ordinary army of mounted men. Their plagues of fire, smoke, and brimstone, suggest the origin to be the same pit of the Abyss from which issued the smoke and the plague of locusts.

The Personal Execution of the Lamb's Wrath

Thus will Christ make use of awesome convulsions in nature, of angelic agencies from above, and of demoniacal agencies from beneath. But the consummation of the wrath of the Lamb is reached only when Christ in person shall come forth upon the white horse of victory, followed by the white-horsed armies of heaven. Then will He smite the blasphemous and impenitent nations of the earth, Himself treading "the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty." This victory of Christ will settle for a thousand years the controversy with Satan as to who is the rightful and dominant ruler of the earth.

Some Results

1. *A Saved Multitude.*

It is a matter of common observation that affliction affects men diversely, according to the attitude of their hearts towards God. While one class of persons will be mellowed and penitent, another class will be hardened and rebellious. Also it is a well known fact that seasons of persecution and hardship have been seasons which have developed faith in some and revealed faithlessness in others. When, therefore, the Fifth Seal shows us the souls of martyrs beneath the

altar we naturally connect them with the first four seals—war, anarchy, famine and pestilence. Came not the martyrs as a result of faithfulness and loyalty to Christ? Then, too, behold the innumerable multitude that is distinctly said to have "come out of THE GREAT TRIBULATION."

2. *An Impenitent Host.*

But the hardening effects of the wrath of the Lamb are truly appalling. And as when Pharaoh hardened his heart there was need for still sorer plagues, so in the Apocalypse the judgment scenes are increasingly severe. We already have noted the prayer of the impenitent to the rocks and mountains to fall upon them (Rev. 6:16). Prior to this many shall have perished from the earth. Under the Fourth Seal authority was given to Death and Hades over the fourth part of the earth. Many perish from the plagues of the Seven Trumpets (8:11; 9:20). But notwithstanding the presence of unparalleled suffering and death, "the rest of mankind,.....repented not of the works of their hands" (9:20). This same spirit flaunts itself in connection with the Fourth and Seventh Vials. There it is recorded that not only will men not repent, but will blaspheme the name of God, who hath power over these plagues (16:9, 21). Can any doom be too great for men so depraved and godless?

3. *The Defeat of Satan and His Allies.*

In the conflict between Satan and Christ there can be no doubt as to the outcome. Judgment upon Satan is the logical issue. Christ once said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." First, he will be cast out of heaven, as we have seen; and following his masterful attempt to gain sovereign control of the world he will be cast out of the earth and consigned to the Abyss (Rev. 20:1-3). And immediately preceding the execution of wrath against Satan will come the wrath of the Lamb upon Satan's allies—the Beast and the False Prophet and the kings of the earth (19:19).

Summary

Thus through judgments executed by means of cosmical forces, by the agency of angels, by wicked men and evil spirits, and by the personal presence of Christ, this Gospel Age is to terminate in a catastrophe as overwhelming as that of the Flood in the days of Noah. The Gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; but many mock at the Gospel and reject it. After the removal of the Church this rebellious spirit will become turbulent and will culminate in an organized revolt against God. Necessity will demand that Divine intervention forceably put down this rebellion. Christ will come and smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron.

Defense of the Wrath of God

If any one is inclined to murmur against this revelation of the wrath of the Lamb, let him weigh carefully the opinion of the inhabitants of heaven: "And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy. And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments" (16:5-7).

And shall we not approve and join in the song of Moses and the Lamb?

> "Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (15:3, 4).

But it is not for man to murmur against the revealed will of God, nor to magnify the grace of God above His wrath. In times past when earthly conditions demanded that God should suddenly descend in judgment upon an apostate race, the swiftness of His anger was terrible. And if yet again Divine intervention is necessary to check the course of evil and to punish impenitent men, should we not still pray, "Thy kingdom come"?

We could heartily wish that there were no such thing as an approaching Day of Wrath. Indeed many are ignoring it, and some even deny it. But should we not rather deplore and seek to change the unbearable conditions which shall prevail and make necessary for God again to interfere in the affairs of men in order to check the course of sin and to destroy evildoers from the face of the earth?

The wrath of God for the most part has become a silent note in the preaching of today. The wondrous grace and matchless love of God have quite obscured His vengeance and His wrath. So bright is the effulgence of God's goodness that we have become blinded to His wrath. But from the preaching of John the Baptist to the Apocalypse of John the Apostle, the harsh pronouncement of impending doom is a dominant note. Just because this age is the Day of Grace is no proof that it will not be followed by a brief Day of Wrath. Shall we not do well to accept the revelation, and with John the Baptist warn men to escape the wrath to come?

IV

The World-Wide Extent of the Approaching Crisis

THE WORLD-WIDE EXTENT OF THE APPROACHING CRISIS

1. A Presumption from the Preceding Epochal Crises.
2. Demanded by the Growing Unification of the World.
3. Demanded by the World-wide Preaching of the Gospel.
4. Demanded by the World-wide Dispersion of the Jews.
5. Demanded by a World-wide Apostacy.
6. Christ Foretold a World-wide Judgment.
7. Paul Taught a Coming World-Crisis.
8. A World-Crisis Revealed to John.
9. The Vintage of the Earth.

THE WORLD-WIDE EXTENT OF THE APPROACHING CRISIS

ALREADY we have seen that however localized the setting of each epochal crisis is it has been race-wide in its intent. This was especially true of the Crisis of the Cross. In it God manifested His love for a perishing world. The Lamb of God was crucified in order to bear away the sin of the world. In like manner when Christ returns to execute judgment will He not deal with the entire world? While the culmination of the conflict will be localized in Palestine, and have chiefly to do with the Jews and the old prophetical world, probably no portion of the world will escape. No other interpretation seems to exhaust the language of the prophecies. Just as God dealt with the race in the Edenic, the Flood, the Babel, the Egypt, and the Cross crises, so in the approaching crisis-period we shall have an actual world-crisis. Such at least is the presumption we are forced to hold from our study of all similar periods in the past.

Demanded by the Growing Unification of the World

Both in His schemes of grace for men and in His punitive judgments upon men God treats the world as a unit. However segregated by language, history, custom, and self-interest, we are still to remember that God "made of one every nation of men to dwell on

A BIRD'S-EYE-VIEW OF THE APOCALYPSE

The Apocalypse of the Son of Man 1:1-20	The Apocalypse of the Church Age 2:1-3:22	The Apocalypse of the Premillennial Epochal Crisis 4:1-19:21	The Apocalypse of the Millennium 20:1-6	The Apocalypse of the Postmillennial Epochal Crisis 20:7-15	The Apocalypse of the New Earth 21:1-22:21
The Eternal Christ in the Midst of the Churches	The Kingdom in Mystery Christ Absent	Transition Period Daniel's Seventieth Week Christ Triumphant Satan Bound	The Kingdom in Manifestation Christ Present	Transition Period Judgment of the Great White Throne Satan Cast into the Lake of Fire	The Eternal City Come Down from Heaven to Earth

all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). In God's eyes the solidarity of the race is an accomplished fact. It was a unit from the beginning. God separated one nation for special revelation and blessing, but never has His heart ceased to yearn for all mankind. Nor is this unity of the race so impossible of visual realization as it once was. The present commercial, educational, political, and religious movements of the world are tending towards its speedy unification. And this growing unification of a divided race argues for a world-crisis as we approach the end of the age.

Demanded by the World-wide Preaching of the Gospel

During the present age God has temporarily cast off the Jews who had miserably failed in giving to the world their knowledge of the true God. Even when God wanted to show mercy to the great Gentile city of Ninevah He had difficulty in securing a prophet who would undertake the missionary task. So selfish and exclusive was Jonah that he had no heart for his job. And when the city repented He was in a petulant mood. But through the failure of Israel to be a missionary nation God instituted an entirely new order of things. The Church was called into being and commissioned to go forth and evangelize all the nations of the earth. This work has been tardily and discreditably done. Meanwhile Christ tarries, expectantly yet almost hopelessly, as His question to His disciples would appear to indicate: "Neverthe-

less, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth?"

But let us not forget that Christ taught that "the FIELD IS THE WORLD." Does not this necessitate a world-wide harvest? The preaching of the Gospel "unto the uttermost part of the earth" *demands that the reaping be as extensive as the sowing.* Also let us remember that other teaching of our Master that "the harvest is the end of the age." This prepares us for the harvest scene in Revelation 14:14-16, in which is the injunction, "Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the HARVEST OF THE EARTH is ripe. And he that sat upon the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth, and the EARTH was reaped." The world-wide seed-sowing of the Gospel Age demands that the earth, the entire earth, be reaped at the end of the age.

Demanded by the World-wide Dispersion of the Jews

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations" (Luke 21:24). With these words Christ foretold the world-wide dispersion of the Jews. The prophecy has its literal fulfillment in the world of today. Everywhere we find the Jew. Everywhere naturalized, a part of every nation, and yet distinct from every nation. But the same Christ who predicted this world-wide dispersion also set a limit to it. It is not to be forever, but only "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

When the times of the Gentiles run out God will execute judgment upon them.

Following the reference to the "great and terrible day of Jehovah," as contained in Joel 2:28-32, God continues: "For, behold, in those days, and at that time, when I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will execute judgment upon them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations" (3:1-3).

The present period of world-wide dispersion of the Jews is a period of persecution for them. But let the Gentile take warning. All of the curses that have fallen upon outcast Israel are in store for the nations that have persecuted her. This was prophesied even in the days of Moses. When God shall gather these outcasts from the ends of the earth unto the land which their fathers possessed, then "God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, that persecuted thee" (See Deut. 30:1-7).

Demanded by a World-wide Apostacy

In Revelation 12-14 we have a glimpse behind the scenes. There we see the real personages at work who will be responsible for the approaching world crisis. They are Satan and his emissaries. "Woe for the earth and the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you having great wrath" (12:12). The first agent of Satan's wrath is the Beast out of the

sea, after whom "the whole earth wondered" (13:3). And they (the whole earth) "worshipped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast." They also will worship the conquering and blasphemous Beast (13:4-6), whose authority will be over "every tribe and people and tongue and nation (v. 7). "And ALL THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain" (v. 8).

Such a world-wide apostacy will be made possible *only by the previous removal of the Church from the earth.* After the enlightening and restraining influence of the Church is withdrawn men will become so infatuated with their sinful worship, and so averse to God, that His most severe and scorching judgments will not bring men to repentance, but only cause them to curse and blaspheme God (Rev. 16: 9, 11, 21). They will thus invite their own destruction. Such a race-wide apostacy can be dealt with only by a race-wide judgment.

Christ Foretold a World-wide Judgment

Among the events immediately preceding His return to the earth Christ declared, "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations" (Luke 21:25). This distress is chiefly due to fear, a dire foreboding of some impending doom (v. 26). But this fear will not be groundless. Judgment will indeed descend, wide-

spread and disastrous. Christ's warning to His disciples concerning the dreadful day that is to come suddenly as a snare, clearly emphasizes its universal character: "For so shall it come upon ALL THEM THAT DWELL UPON THE FACE OF ALL THE EARTH" (Luke 21:35). Where is the gain of minimizing the scope of this coming judgment? Why not rather call upon men everywhere to repent and to prepare for it?

Again while the judgment scene described by Christ in Matthew 25 may include the Postmillennial crisis, as many suppose, is it not rather a dual prophecy, like so many of the visions of the future? For although the judgment itself appears to be final it evidently *begins* to be inauguated upon the return of Christ to the earth: "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered ALL THE NATIONS" (vv. 31, 32). This portion of the prophecy without doubt refers to Christ's return to the earth in order to establish His Millennial kingdom, at which time the nations separated to His right hand shall inherit the kingdom (v. 34), while those upon His left hand shall be doomed to the Lake of Fire. This judgment of the living nations differs from that described in Revelation 20:7-9, in which fire comes down from heaven and destroys those who have been gathered to fight against the Beloved City. It is the judgment of the living nations described in Matthew 25, that Christ executes *when He comes to sit upon the throne of*

His glory. But that earthly reign will terminate with another universal judgment which will include not only the living nations but also the wicked dead (Rev. 20).

Paul Taught a Coming World-Crisis

The testimony of Paul accords with that of Christ. In his Mars Hill address he declared that God "commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:30, 31). Here we see that the judgment of the world will be a sequence of the present universal call to repentance. This judgment is not now in progress, but is reserved for a future "day"; by which we understand not a day of twenty-four hours, but another and longer period of time, i. e., the "day of wrath."

This day Paul frequently refers to. For example, "but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself WRATH IN THE DAY OF WRATH and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5). Nor is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath; for how otherwise can God judge the world? (Rom. 3:4, 5).

That these references have no connection with the judgment of individuals after death is evident from the context. But the further teaching of Paul is that this judgment is in connection with the reappearing of Christ: "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus

from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thess. 1:7, 8). This scene is an earthly scene and seems to include all who at the end of the Gospel Age are still rebellious towards Christ. A world-crisis has come and God again descends in person, as in all of the epochal crises, to judge the world for its sins.

The World-wide Crisis as Revealed to John

Beginning with the opening of the Second Seal, wherein the rider of the red horse is authorized to "take peace FROM THE EARTH," up to the final conflict between the rider of the white horse and the allied armies under the Beast and the False Prophet, there are nearly everywhere indications of a world-wide crisis. It is true that the action of the Fourth Seal is restricted to the "fourth part of the earth," but this only emphasizes the world-wide lawlessness and anarchy as the result of the Second Seal. The trumpets also are limited in the scope of their action, yet when we come to the Seventh Trumpet we hear the great voices in heaven proclaim, "THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign unto the ages of the ages" (Rev 11:15). But taking possession of the kingdom of the world will be preceded by a world-conflict and judgment. "And the nations were wroth,

and thy wrath came," and the time was ripe "to destroy them that destroy the earth" (v. 18).

Turning now to the Bowls of Wrath, we are impressed with their universal character. The First is poured into the earth, and every follower of the Beast is sorely afflicted. The Second is poured into the sea, and "every living soul died." The Third is poured into the fountains and rivers. So fearful is this judgment that it is defended by the Altar (16:7). The Fourth is poured upon the sun, and men are scorched with great heat. The Fifth is poured upon the throne of the Beast, and his subjects blaspheme God. The Sixth is poured upon the river Euphrates. This is restrictive, but it is followed by the spirits of demons going forth "UNTO THE KINGS OF THE WHOLE WORLD," to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. The Seventh Bowl is poured out upon the air. There follow voices and lightnings and thunders and the greatest earthquake ever known. "And the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (16:19). Thus each of the three series of judgments—the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls of Wrath, brings us to a consummation of judgments against a hostile race.

The Harvest of the Vintage of the Earth

Under the figure of the grape harvest we have another vision of an earth-judgment: "Send forth

thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great, of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:18, 19). This winepress is trodden without the City, but all nations are represented. For the scene carries us forward to the return of Christ, who shall "smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty" (19:15). This is followed immediately by the "great supper of God," at which is eaten the "flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (19:18).

All of the enemies of Christ will be destroyed—the Beast, the False Prophet, the kings of the earth, and their armies. How indeed can the King of kings reign supreme over the earth so long as there are rebellious spirits in any portion of the earth? No; there can be no Millennium of world-wide blessedness that is not instituted by a world-wide crisis which shall settle the issue as to whether Christ is to be worshipped or Satan. God's problem of dealing with the world is a race problem; and not only have all the epochal crises of the past been world-crises, but the one now approaching will prove no exception to the rule.

V

The Brevity of the Premillennial Crisis

THE BREVITY OF THE PREMILLENNIAL CRISIS

1. What John Saw.
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THE BREVITY OF THE PREMILLENNIAL CRISIS

IF STUDENTS of prophecy had but clearly distinguished between the Ages themselves and the transitional periods between the Ages many fanciful interpretations of the Apocalypse would have been avoided. Even though we should grant that there already has been a historical and typical fulfillment of portions of the book, there would still remain a future and actual fulfillment that would exhaust the language of the visions and lead up to the descent of Christ in judgment. What John saw was not previsions of secular or sacred history, dating from John's day and culminating at the close of the present age, *but the culmination itself*. Although a double fulfillment may be enfolded in John's visions, many believe they chiefly portray events still in the future.

Two Essential Distinctions

There are at least two essential distinctions to be made between an Epochal Crisis and a Dispensation. First of all, a *Dispensation is characterized by the non-miraculous intervention of God in behalf of His people as a whole, and for the punishment of the wicked.* Ordinarily in the onward historical movements of each dispensation events have transpired and changes have occurred as the result of natural causes, more or

less evident. There have been some exceptions to this law; but whenever during a dispensation great revolutions have come, and the course of history has been deviated, the *Divine principle of government has remained the same.* For example, during this Christian Dispensation momentous changes have come, kingdoms have risen and fallen, the Church herself has experienced many a dark hour; yet the age itself *has in no way changed its dispensational character.* During the past Christian centuries God never has interfered with the natural course of history in such a manner as to introduce an entirely new dispensation. The free offer of salvation is still open to all, and God is not now judging nations and peoples by any unusual or supernatural methods.

But the character of an Epochal Crisis is totally different. *In every such period the natural course of history is checked and diverted by sudden and supernatural judgments of God, as in the crisis of the Flood or of the Cross.* Such is the character of events in the major portion of the Apocalypse. They are not natural, but supernatural. The result will be an entirely new dispensation.

But the second essential difference between an Epochal Crisis and a Dispensation is in the *time element. A dispensation must be sufficiently long for a fair trial of the new regime.* With the possible exception of the Edenic Age no dispensation has been shorter than four hundred years and usually much longer. Upon the other hand, *an epochal crisis always*

has been of comparatively short duration, as we have seen in our study of the periods already past. So let us not confuse the events of the prolonged Christian dispensation with the dramatically brief period of judgment which may soon startle the world with its terrors.

The Hurry-up Character of John's Visions

We are now to examine the time element in the possibly nearing convulsions of the next transitional period of history as portrayed in Revelation 4-19. If we accept this book as truly a revelation and not an enigma, and if we take God to mean what He says, there ought to be no difficulty in seeing that these chapters describe a comparatively brief period. There is nothing in these chapters necessarily to indicate a protracted period. All events are of a hurry-up character. The various judgment scenes follow each other in rapid succession, like modern moving pictures. Indeed frequently they seem not to wait for one another, for new events take the stage before preceding ones have retired. Occasionally there are ominous pauses and interesting episodes, but they stay not the swift march of impending judgments. Probably the entire period will not exceed a few years, while most of the events seem plainly to transpire within a prescribed seven-year period.

The Events under the Seals Indicate Brevity

The opening of the first four Seals reveals war, anarchy, famine, pestilence and death. Why the march

of conquering armies and their natural sequences should require centuries for their accomplishment, as some have maintained, does not seem clear. A few years are sufficiently long; nor do they necessitate a forced interpretation.

The opening of the Fifth Seal reveals martyr souls who cry from beneath the altar, "How long, O Master?" "And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet FOR A LITTLE TIME." Other of their fellow servants were shortly to meet a like fate, then vengeance would speedily be executed upon their enemies. According to the old school of historical interpreters this "little time" is not yet ended. For the punishment of their enemies evidently occurs under the Sixth Seal, which describes the Day of Wrath with its sharp and supernatural judgments.

Between the Sixth and Seventh Seals there is an enforced delay incident to the sealing of the servants of God from among the Twelve Tribes of Israel (7:3). The mere mention here of delay infers no tarrying elsewhere in the action of the Seals. In contrast with these sealed ones, and perhaps on account of their testimony, we have the great multitude, made up of those from every nation, who come out of the Great Tribulation (v. 14). So intense will be this tribulation that its days must needs be *shortened*, else "no flesh would have been saved" (Matt. 24:22). And since "IMMEDIATELY AFTER the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven"

(Matt. 24:29), the beginning of the Great Tribulation must precede the opening of the Sixth Seal, wherein these events are described. This tribulation also satisfactorily accounts for the martyr souls seen under the altar of the Fifth Seal, which need not be made to cover a prolonged martyr period of several centuries.

Thus it seems evident that no extended period of history is necessary for the events enfolded under the Seals. Swift conquest, famine, pestilence, death, celestial and terrestial disturbances—all these could easily transpire within a period of a few years at the longest.

The opening of the Seventh Seal is followed by a HALF HOUR silence in heaven (Rev. 8:1). This is the first definite demarkation of time in this portion of the book and indicates haste. Even in heaven no time can be wasted. Not even a full hour can be devoted to the business on hand. The time is short and requires haste.

The Quick Action of the Trumpet Judgments

When we examine the Trumpets we are impressed with their quick action and rapidity of movement. First, we note their supernatural character. The events are not the natural sequences of history, but are directly traceable to transactions in heaven. The sounding of each trumpet is followed immediately by swift judgment upon earth. Note the rapid action of the trumpets. They remind one of our modern rapid-fire guns; but the consequences are far more terrible.

Whether taken literally or symbolically these judgments are supernatural *and hence require no extended periods of time for their fulfillment.*

The description of the Fifth Trumpet judgment is remarkable, among other things, for the time limitation set for the operation of the locust army from the pit of the Abyss. The locusts have no power to kill men, but only to torment them for FIVE MONTHS (9:5, 10). The period is both definite and brief. It affords a hint as to the brevity of the other judgments, for this is one of the most important. Since there is this specified limitation of time, and since these locusts have no power to kill, this Fifth Trumpet can have no reference to the murderous scourge of the Saracens or to any other army whose purpose is to kill and destroy.

The vast and strange Euphratean army described under the second Woe Trumpet, the like of which never has been mobilized, would require time for its operations. But with modern methods of rapid transit the movements of even this vast army need not require any greatly extended time. Nor need its mission be prolonged since its effectiveness depends not upon superior numbers, but upon the strange horses which do the fighting (9:18, 19). Just how much of this description is natural, and how much is supernatural, we may not determine; but there is a suggestion of the latest fiendish explosives of modern warfare; and there is also the supernaturalness of the judgment to be taken into account.

Further evidence of the rapid movement of the Trumpet judgments is found in chapter 11: "The second Woe is past: behold the third Woe cometh quickly" (v. 14). This is in accord with the oath of the strong angel in the episode between the sounding of the Sixth and Seventh Trumpets: "There shall be DELAY NO LONGER: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God" (10:6, 7). And immediately following the sounding of the Seventh, or third Woe Trumpet, there are voices of rejoicing in heaven because God has forcibly taken possession of the kingdom, destroyed His enemies, and rewarded His servants (11:15-18). The Trumpets seem to be even more limited in time than the Seals. It has been suggested by Prof. W. G. Moorehead that the Third Trumpet starts where the Third Seal ends and the Fourth Seal begins.

The Time Limits and Expressions of Chapters 11-13

We have some strong sidelights upon the brevity of the approaching crisis in the time expressions. First, we shall consider those of chapter 11. "And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot FORTY AND TWO MONTHS. And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND THREESCORE DAYS" (vv. 2, 3). We take these time expressions literally. The old

year-day theory has been shown to be untrustworthy. Even in the two instances in the Old Testament where a day is made to symbolize a year, day means day and year means year (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6). One apparent exception is found in Daniel 9:24-27. But there the phrase "seventy weeks" literally means "seventy sevens"; and from the context we learn that Gabriel means years instead of days.

Many believe that it is the last of Daniel's "seventy sevens" that is referred to in Revelation 11:2, 3, and elsewhere in the book. The giving over of the Holy City to the nations for forty-two months for desecration probably covers the latter half of the week, or three and one-half years. The twelve hundred and sixty days during which the two witnesses prophesy in the city quite likely covers the same period. But even though these periods may not exactly synchronize, their combined length is only seven years.

Need we say that the three and one-half days of verses 9 and 11 are also literal days? The testimony of the two witnesses being finished, they are then overcome by the Beast from the Abyss and are killed. Their dead bodies lie exposed in the city for three days and a half, after which the breath of God enters into them and they are received up to heaven.

The time expressions of chapters 12 and 13 also are so definite that we are not left to the exercise of our own opinions. When Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven to the earth he has "great wrath, knowing that he HATH BUT A SHORT TIME" (12:12).

This short time evidently is the period of his persecution of the Woman who had fled to the wilderness where she was providentially nourished for a "TIME, AND TIMES, AND HALF A TIME, FROM THE FACE OF THE SERPENT" (12:14). Since the period of the preservation of the Woman already has been stated to be "A THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND THREESCORE DAYS" (v. 6), which equals three and a half times, or years, we know that these expressions mean the same thing. The same period is mentioned in chapter 13 in another connection. The Beast, having been slain and resurrected, receives "authority to continue FORTY AND TWO MONTHS" (v. 5). This period of three and a half years of the blasphemous reign of the Beast is the latter half of the Seventieth Week, for it will culminate in his destruction from the presence of Christ (2 Thess. 2:3-9).

This same important period of three and a half years properly synchronizes with the statement in Daniel's prophecy that the saints of the Most High shall be given into the hands of the Antichrist "UNTIL A TIME, AND TIMES, AND HALF A TIME." Following this persecution the judgment is set and the abiding kingdom of Christ is established (Dan. 7:25-27). Once again Daniel is instructed by Michael, the archangel, that the final and bitterest persecution of his people "shall be FOR A TIME, TIMES AND HALF A TIME" (12:7). Daniel did not fully understand. Then it was told him, "The words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end" (vv. 8, 9). In the Apocalypse we arrive

at the "time of the end." According to chapters 11, 12 and 13, Daniel's "time, times, and half a time" is the same as in the Revelation, and equals the forty-two months and also the thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Probably there will be preliminary events leading up to this crisis period. It may be that the rise of the Beast, his intrigues and alliances and conquests, may cover a considerable period of time, though not necessarily. But from the firm establishment of his kingdom to its consummation the time will probably not be longer than seven years. It is simply the brevity of this crisis period that we here are attempting to show.

The Intensity and Brevity of the Seven Bowls of Wrath

Chapter 15 describes the Seven Bowls of Wrath in which is "finished the wrath of God" (v. 1). They deal in particular with the judgments upon the Beast and his kingdom. They are sudden, direct, and supernatural. The earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains, the sun, are first affected and men are sorely afflicted. Then the throne of the Beast is darkened. The first five of these plagues reminds us of the Egyptian plagues and like them may transpire within a few months. Under the Sixth Bowl the working of demons in league with men must help materially to hasten events and so to shorten the period. When the Seventh Bowl of wrath is poured into the air a great voice

from the temple and the throne in heaven proclaims, "It is finished!" The living nations are judged, but especially Babylon. Thus the rapid march of events under the Seven Bowls of Wrath, together with their character, is certainly indicative of brevity of time.

The Overlapping of Events

If all the events under the Seals, Trumpets and Vials waited for each to end before the next should begin, the time required for their transpiration would necessarily be somewhat prolonged. But if the events successively recorded under the Seals, for example, do not always wait for one another, then the time of the Seven Seals as a whole is shortened. While the war of conquest under the First Seal may continue for a number of years, why should the famine, pestilence and death, which are described under the next three Seals, wait for the war to end? Such things are often the concomitants of war. Likewise, although the sounding of the first four Trumpets is described successively, the events under each Trumpet need not wait for each other. For example, under the First Trumpet the third part of the earth is affected, burning up trees and green grass. If taken literally, this might require considerable time. But why should the scourge of the Second Trumpet, which afflicts the sea, wait until the effects of the First Trumpet are entirely accomplished? A like query may be raised with regard to the Third and Fourth Trumpets. Their action is restricted to different spheres and why may

there not be an overlapping in the time of their accomplishment? The same should be said with reference to first four Vials, or Bowls, of Wrath.

The Recurrence of Events

Of even greater importance is the discovery that a number of the most important events are barely referred to in their setting with other events, their fuller description being reserved until later. This later description of events that have previously transpired is confusing to the cursory reader; but this very recurrence of events enables us to see that *much of the material is merely repetition, giving the details of events previously mentioned.*

For example, take the doom of Babylon which is mentioned under the Seventh Bowl of Wrath:—"And Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (Rev. 16:19). But the details of the description of her destruction are reserved for the entire seventeenth and eighteenth chapters. And although the description is comparatively long, the judgment itself is represented as brief. Wanton and vainglorious, blasphemous and defiant, it is said of Babylon, "Therefore in ONE DAY shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her" (18:8). So sudden and so appalling will be the disaster that the kings of the earth, her paramours, fearfully explain, "Woe, woe,

the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in ONE HOUR is thy judgment come." The refrain, with variations, is taken up by the merchants and the ship-masters (vv. 15-19). Can we escape the conclusion that God seeks to reveal the swiftness and shortness of the destruction of Babylon and the evil system which she symbolizes? But as already stated this judgment was accomplished under the Seventh Vial; so that no additional time is to be allowed for the events of chapters 17 and 18.

Another instance of recurrence is in reference to the personal return of Christ in judgment. For example, see Revelation 6:16 and 11:17, 18. Examine also 14:1 with 14:19, 20. Here we see Christ already come; but the detailed description of His return, and of His victory over His enemies, is reserved for the nineteenth chapter.

Parallelism Between the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls of Wrath

Perhaps attention should have been directed earlier to the parallelism that exists between the three great judgment series of the approaching epochal crisis. These judgment series probably are successive only in order of description, not in order of time. The trumpets do not necessarily follow the Seals in chronological order, nor the Vials the Trumpets. Each series deals with the entire crisis-period, each looking through to the end. This is true of the Seals and the Trumpets as well as of the Vials. A comparison

of the Seventh Seal, the Seventh Trumpet, and the Seventh Vial will readily confirm this statement. But the parallelism extends to others of the series besides the seventh. This is especially true of the Trumpets and the Vials. The first four Trumpets and the first four Vials affect respectively the earth, the sea, the fountains and rivers, and the sun. The Fifth Trumpet is directed only against such "men as have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (9:4); while the Fifth Vial is explicitly said to be poured out upon "the throne of the beast" (16:10). The Sixth Trumpet and the Sixth Vial deal with the great river Euphrates and the Euphratean army. This evident parallelism directly affects the time element and necessarily shortens it.

Why Separate Pictures Instead of a Composite One?

Instead of a composite picture of the approaching judgment period we have separate series of pictures, or visions. This is not for the purpose of confusing, but in order to simplify and vivify. By this method God would seem to have singled out and thrown upon the great screen of prophecy the various spheres of His coming judgments. Have we not in the Seals God's judgments upon apostate Christendom, intimated in the cry of the martyr souls under the Fifth Seal, the ascending prayers of the saints under the Seventh Seal, and perhaps also the tribulation victors of chapter 7? On the other hand, the Trumpets seem to culminate upon heathendom, as intimated in the

resumé at the close of the Sixth Trumpet: "And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood" (9:20). And without question the Bowls of Wrath have to do chiefly with the judgments upon the Beast and his kingdom (16:6, 9, 10, 14, 19). Thus although each of these series of judgments contains intimations of its far-reaching and universal character, each also is in a measure distinctive and limited in action. A composite picture is a blurred picture. Vividness and clearness of detail is best secured by separate pictures, each from a different angle of vision. This is why we have four Gospels instead of one. And this is the method that seems to have been employed by God in the Apocalypse.

Summary

Is it not evident from this examination of the material that the main portion of the Revelation deals with events wholly in the future and limited in duration to a few short years? Much of the material is preparatory and explanatory, or else descriptive of events already past, which add nothing to the onward march of events, and hence require no additional estimate of time. The three series of judgments are not successive in transpiration, but only in description. What they portray is not numerous judgments scattered through many centuries, *but a single judgment*

period of comparatively brief duration. This we have seen in the overlappings, the parallelisms, the repetitions, and the recurrences. Each series of judgments, whether Seals, Trumpets or Vials, is complete in itself. Though they do not all start with the same event *each one leads up to the same climax, or crisis,* which accomplishes the wrath of God against an apostate race and heralds the establishment of His kingdom of righteousness upon the earth.

VI

Mercy in the Midst of Wrath

MERCY IN THE MIDST OF WRATH

1. The Customary Thing with God.
2. Indicated in the Visions of the Throne.
3. Shown in the Removal of the Church.
4. The Harvest of the Earth.
5. Shown in Repeated Warnings and in Previous Judgments.
6. Mercy Shown to Israel of Old.
7. Mercy for the Gentiles Also.
8. Foregleams of Millennial Glories.
9. God Fully Justified.

MERCY IN THE MIDST OF WRATH

EVERY epochal crisis in the past has been the occasion for the exhibition of Divine mercy as well as of fearsome judgments. We have but to recall the preaching and the warning of Noah to the men of his generation, and finally the preservation of Noah and his family during the Flood Crisis. Also we recall the miraculous deliverance of the Chosen People out of the power of the Egyptians as another striking manifestation of mercy in the midst of destructive judgments. These two signal instances are the most familiar, yet they are not solitary. Never has God intervened in the course of human events to judge the sins of men without showing Himself also to be the God of mercy. And while we are overawed and appalled by the descriptions of the judgments which are to break in cyclonic violence upon the world when the present dispensation of grace is suddenly brought to its close, yet in the midst of the darkened clouds and the lightning flashes of God's wrath we see also bright visions of God's love and wondrous grace.

Indicated in the Visions of the Throne

Even in the midst of the judgment throne, with which the various judgment visions in the Revelation

are introduced, John sees "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain"; and sees also the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb with harps of praise, and hears them sing a new song, saying,

> "Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth" (Rev. 5:9, 10).

This song of rejoicing over the redeemed of every land and nation alleviates the horrors of the coming judgments thereafter described. God's wrath will indeed scorch and consume the earth, but not those who are willing to accept His overtures of mercy. The Cross of Christ carries provision of salvation for all mankind. And even after the Church of Christ has been removed to its heavenly sphere there will be left those who will share in the benefits of the atonement. These will be "a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth." The kingdom in view evidently is the Millennial Kingdom.

The myriads of angels round about the throne, though sinless and knowing nothing of the joys of redemption, say with a great voice,

> "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:11, 12).

The *power* and the *might* are not gifts which Christ is never to use, but which, though used, do not overshadow his mercy. Even after His judgments sweep over the earth there will still be rejoicing both in heaven and on the earth. Indeed the rejoicings that John heard were simply anticipatory of the final victories of Christ in connection with the establishment of His kingdom. Then truly will every created thing say,

> "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever" (v. 13).

Mercy Shown in the Removal of the Church from the Earth

Even prior to the breaking of God's wrath upon the world during the approaching crisis-period the true Church will gloriously share in the mercy of God. Before the Day of the Lord comes both the saints that sleep in Jesus and the living saints shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). They who wait for God's Son from heaven are to be delivered "from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10). "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. 5:4).

Christians have their tribulations in the present. All who live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution. But we shall not come into judgment (John 5:24).

We shall escape the wrath that is coming upon the world to the uttermost (1 Thess. 2:16), for God appointed us not unto wrath (1 Thess. 5:9). Instead, we are to share in the execution of judgment: "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?..... Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:2, 3). Before the hour of trial comes for those who dwell upon the earth the true Church probably will already have been removed from the scene of woe.

The Harvest of the Earth

There are other bodies of saved ones, in addition to the Church. Another age, the Millennial Age, is to follow ours, and a holy remnant of both Jews and Gentiles will be saved who shall sow the Millennial earth. Christ said that the end of this age would be a harvest time, when not only the tares will be burned, but when the good seed, who are *the sons of the kingdom,* will be preserved (Matt. 13:36-43). This figure of the harvest is vividly set before us in the Revelation: "And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap; for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Rev.

14:14-16). The language, "another angel," suggests that the one "like unto a son of man" is also an angel. Anyway Christ said concerning this harvest, "the reapers are the angels" (Matt. 13:39).

During the Gospel Age both the sowing and the reaping are committed to men. Everywhere we are to scatter the seed broadcast, and we also are held responsible for the harvest. But in the consummation of the age, when the Church shall have been removed from the earth, a new order will prevail, and the final reaping of the earth's harvest will be done by the angels. With all our wisdom we men are not able always to distinguish between the wheat and the tares. The final separation therefore must be committed to beings of higher intelligence who will make no mistakes.

Mercy Shown in Repeated Warnings and Previous Judgments

The very prophecies of impending wrath, so fully given by Old Testament prophets and also by our Lord and the New Testament writers, are themselves ample proof of God's graciousness. No word of God shall fail. Through Noah the antediluvians were amply warned, and in due time the Flood came. Through prophets, seers, and God Himself the coming doom of the world long has been heralded. That dread Day of Wrath will assuredly come, as came the Flood of old. God is under no obligation to

warn men. Its pronouncement is God's loving summons to men to repent and be saved.

Furthermore, while the judgments described in the Revelation are actually in progress, warnings and appeals will be interspersed. For example, following the Fourth Trumpet an eagle flying in mid-heaven, will be heard, "saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels, who are yet to sound" (8:13). This warning implies an opportunity for repentance (9:21).

Similarly there will be a proclamation from a new source of good tidings: "And he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters" (14:7). This does not sound much like the good tidings which men are now proclaiming; but in contrast with the wrecking judgments of that hour even the proclamation to fear and worship God as the Creator will be good tidings.

Also there is the awful warning of the third angel of Revelation 14: "If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (14:10). But in precious contrast is the vision of

rejoicing in the following chapter: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

> "Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (15:2-4).

God's judgments are His "righteous acts"; and when men see that they are executed in mercy, as well as in wrath, many will come and worship before Him.

Mercy Shown to Israel of Old

Before the rigors and terrors of the brief day of God's wrath reach their climax He will have resumed His dealings with His covenanted people of old. Though now despised and downtrodden, God has not forgotten His covenant with them—a covenant of blessing, as well as of cursing. Their latter end is repeatedly depicted in most vivid and glowing colors. Hence immediately preceding the coming time of their unequalled tribulation the command shall go forth, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the

trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads" (Rev. 7:3). And those sealed numbered one hundred and forty-four thousand out of every tribe of the children of Israel. Scattered Israel will be regathered from among the nations. During the period of Jacob's trouble many doubtless will perish; but the remnant will turn to the Lord and be saved (Rom. 11:26, 27).

The Jewish problem is a perplexing one to many who do not take time to painstakingly study and humbly believe what God has written on the subject. As Paul argues, the present rejection of the Jews as a nation is merely temporary (Rom. 11). When Christ cursed the fig tree that made such a fair show but which bore no fruit, it was distinctly stated that "it was not the season for figs." If the fig tree symbolized the Jewish nation, then its pretentious professions were belying its real condition. The nation can not be fruitful before it accepts Jesus as its Messiah and is purged of its sins. But they who come out of Jacob shall take root, and shall fill the face of the world with fruit (Isa. 27:6).

The promise made to them through Moses, and afterwards amplified and often repeated, was this: "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, IN THE LATTER DAYS thou shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and hearken unto his voice: for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God; he will not fail thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them" (Deut.

4:30, 31). It is this covenant of mercy that God will keep during the approaching crisis.

Mercy for the Gentiles Also

During the next judgment period there will be another and still larger company of saved ones. In the vision immediately following that of the sealed ones out of the tribes of the children of Israel we behold an innumerable multitude of Gentiles, out "of all tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (Rev. 7:10). Much misunderstanding as to who shall compose this multitude has arisen from not accepting the interpretation given to John by the Elder: "And he said unto me, THESE ARE THEY THAT COME OUT OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION" (Rev. 7:14). The mistake of confusing this company with the Church has been made by many. The two companies seem to be quite distinct. Since "the tribulation, the great one" is still future, and since it occurs in connection with the return of Christ, the saved multitude who come out of it must not be identified with the Church whose members belong to all the centuries that have elapsed since Christ left the earth. But without entering further into this controversy, let us simply accept the interpretation given to John and believe that during that future and unparalleled tribulation God will show abundant mercy to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

Foregleams of Millennial Glories

The close of the Apocalyptic description of the approaching crisis contains two strongly contrasting visions. The first is a vision of what befalls the enemies of Christ, depicting the utter annihilation of the hostile armies and the casting of the Beast and the False Prophet alive into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:17-21). The second is a vision of thrones and of rewards for the martyrs of the period of Satan's wrath and for those who refused to worship the Beast or to receive his mark though they escaped martyrdom (20:4). It is beside our purpose to consider the occupants of the thrones. But concerning the martyrs and the unbeheaded victors under the brief reign of the Beasts, it is specified that they shall live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. They who are to be raised prior to the Great Tribulation shall have no advantage over those who remain true to Christ and the Word of God during those troublous times. This final vision of God's faithfulness introduces us to the glories of the Millennial reign of Christ upon the earth.

God Fully Justified

Is it not clearly evident, therefore, from the foregoing revelations of God's mercy, that God will be fully justified when Christ shall return in glory to purify the earth through devastating and overwhelming judgments? Although the heavens that now are,

and the earth, are being reserved against the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men, as Peter informs us; and although that hour of tribulation will be one of unequalled fury, yet out of all these catastrophes shall come multitudes of saved ones who shall reign with Christ upon the earth. The manifestations of God's mercy during the approaching epochal crisis will surpass those of every preceding judgment period.

D

The Postmillennial Crisis

THE POSTMILLENNIAL EPOCHAL CRISIS

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THE POSTMILLENNIAL CRISIS

THE final great epochal crisis is of vital interest in itself and also because it affords us another clear-cut summary of the characteristics which we have found to be common to all similar periods. The details of the picture are wanting, yet these common characteristics stand out like some huge mountain against the western sky at sunset. The bare outline is in keeping with its distant majesty.

Here again we see a just God directly and suddenly intervening in the affairs of men with punitive judgments. Here is destruction for many, but also mercy for others. Here Satan is again in the foreground. The scope of the judgments and the brevity of the period are as we should expect them to be. But the outcome will be the introduction of a new order of things that will far surpass in glory all that has gone before. Through the telescope of prophecy we behold with reverence and awe visions which belong to the dim future and which are of eternal concern to us.

Some Vital Differences Between the Premillennial and the Postmillennial Crises

For the sake of those who look forward to a Postmillennial return of Christ and to what they term

"the general judgment," which is to occur at that time, let us pause to briefly consider some essential distinctions between the Premillennial and the Postmillennial crises as they were given to the Apostle John. These differences are so marked that it is difficult for some to see how they can possibly refer to a single judgment period. Note carefully the following differences:

1. *They Differ as to the Place Given to Christ.*

In the events which consummate the Premillennial crisis Christ is the prominent figure and the chief actor. He comes forth from heaven, followed by heaven's armies, and personally directs the attack against the hostile armies which war against Him.

But in the Postmillennial crisis Christ is not only not the leading personage, *but is not even mentioned.* It is assumed, however, that He is still King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. *They Differ as to the Agencies of Wrath.*

In the Premillennial crisis judgment is inflicted by Christ Himself. He is the executioner of wrath, smiting the nations with His sharp sword (19:15). There are also the armies of heaven and the birds of prey (19:17-19).

But in the Postmillennial crisis the sole agency of wrath against the living is the "fire from heaven" (20:9).

3. *They Differ as to the Thrones.*

The thrones seen in the Premillennial crisis are occupied by victorious saints unto whom judgment is given. They live and reign with Christ (20:4). These thrones are for the administration of government.

But the throne seen in the Postmillennial crisis is "a great white throne," and its occupant the indescribable and awesome "Him" (20:11). This is purely a throne of judgment.

4. *They Differ as to the Parties Judged.*

The people judged during the Premillennial crisis are the living nations, especially the allied armies under the Beast and the False Prophet (19:17-21).

But in the Postmillennial crisis not only are the living nations judged (20:8, 9), but also all of the wicked dead (20:12, 13).

5. *They Differ as to the Punishment Meted Out To Satan.*

In the Premillennial crisis Satan is merely bound and consigned to the Abyss for a thousand years (20:2, 3).

But in the Postmillennial crisis Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire, there to remain in torment (20:10).

6. *They Differ as to the Resurrection Scenes.*

The resurrection that precedes the Millennium is called the *first,* in distinction from the resurrection

that follows the Millennium. They who share in this first resurrection seem to be principally, if not wholly, the martyrs of the Premillennial crisis (20:4). These live and reign with Christ.

But they who are raised *after* the Millennium are the wicked dead of all the preceding centuries and millenniums, who are raised only for the purpose of final judgment (20:12, 13).

7. *They Differ as to the Rewards.*

A limited reign of a thousand years upon the Millennial earth is granted to those mentioned in the Premillennial crisis (20:4, 6).

But the Postmillennial victors are to reign upon the new earth for ever and ever (22:5).

8. *They Differ as to the City of Jerusalem.*

Prior to the Millennium Jerusalem is given over to the nations to be trodden under foot for forty-two months. But in the Postmillennial Crisis the Gentile armies (11:2) gathered by Satan are permitted merely to encompass the city where they are destroyed (20:9).

But the Jerusalem that is seen after the Postmillennial crisis is a totally different city. It is a "holy city, New Jerusalem," which has come down out of heaven from God (21:2).

After having briefly scanned these essential distinctions, can we lightly do away with a Millennial reign of Christ upon the earth, or fail to recognize both a Premillennial and a Postmillennial epochal crisis?

Millennial Glory

"And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." For a full description of the Millennial Kingdom the Old Testament must be believingly re-read. The prophets foretold not alone the sufferings of the Messiah, but also and *chiefly* the glories that should follow. They were accustomed to dwell at length upon the glorious reign of their Messiah from Mount Zion. They delighted to sing the praises of Jerusalem as the throne of Christ and the governing center of the whole earth. Nor were these vivid descriptions merely the glowing words and fervid imagination of the prophets, but these descriptions of the Millennial glories were usually given as the words of God. At that time the united nation of Israel, having been gathered from among the nations and securely established in its own land, should then be wholly righteous (Isa. 60:21). Unto them shall be given the sovereign power of the nations, and their riches shall be increased beyond measure (Isa. 60:15-20). Unto them shall flow all nations, being in complete subjection (Isa. 60:12; 62:12; 66:12). When the government shall be upon His shoulders, and when the Prince of Peace shall truly reign, then war shall cease and there will be universal peace.

Introduced by the personal return of Christ to the earth and the overthrow of all enemies, heralded by portentous signs in heaven and in earth, marked by physical changes and improved climatic conditions,

blessed by the personal reign of Christ over the earth and the cessation of the reign of Satan, can we not vividly imagine what the Millennial conditions must be? The glowing descriptions of the Old Testament prophets are not extravagant. Rather indeed is human language impoverished in the attempt to portray the earthly blessings and the material glories of the Millennium, in which not Israel only but all nations will share.

Millennial Failure

"And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them" (Rev. 20:7-9).

Thus will end the last test of human government, a test that will be made under the most favorable conditions. The first test of man's ability to govern himself was made in Eden. No sin was present there, but Satan was free and had access to man. Innocence gave way before the Tempter. Disobedience and rebellion against the will of God proved that man was unfit to govern himself. That first test ended in disastrous failure. But so also has each succeeding test. The Flood, the Dispersion, the

Egyptian plagues, the Cross, the Battle of Har-Magedon—all mark off great dispensations in which successive tests of man to govern himself according to the will of God are fully made. So far as man is concerned they all end in failure. Under the reign of Conscience, of Freedom, of Law, of Grace, it has been shown that man can not be cajoled or coerced into wholly yielding himself to the wise and loving control of God. Under each trial he has chosen sin to righteousness. This ancient spirit of rebellion will not be eradicated even by the Gospel, for men will continue to reject it.

Following the present testing of man under the free offer of grace, a final test remains to be tried. Heretofore Satan has had free access to the minds and hearts of men. The Millennial test will find man free from evil suggestions from either Satan or his hosts of evil. Moreover no sinful environment will be allowed. Though in the hands of men the government of the world will be under the direct supervision of Christ. There will also be the Holy Spirit, an enlightened conscience, and laws righteously administered. Under such favorable conditions will failure be possible?

Yet, after one thousand years of the most perfect government the world has experienced, another calamitous failure will ensue. This catastrophe is directly attributable to Satan. After so long a reign of righteousness and peace, during which man will have largely ceased to walk in the ways of sin, there

will still be the issue that Adam and Eve had to face; namely, is even the Millennial man able to resist evil suggestions and insinuations from without and still remain true to God? This test must be made. Even the Millennial man must be tried out. Have you noted the exact language of Revelation 20:3—"after this he MUST be loosed for a little time"? This awful necessity cannot be avoided. The final test will be followed by a final failure. Only thus, apparently, will man learn to cease to trust in himself and cease to rebel against the loving will of God.

Satan Again to the Fore

We have found that Satan has played a prominent part in each of the epochal crises. Indeed we may say that he sometimes has precipitated these crises. This was true of the Edenic crisis. There would have been no such crisis if Satan had not appeared upon the scene. And back of the incorrigible apostacy that preceded the Flood; back of the Babel rebellion; and back of the magicians of Egypt who withstood Moses and Aaron, the deceptive work of Satan is baldly evident. The crisis period of Christ's earthly ministry was marked by repeated assaults and conflicts with Satan. In the Premillennial epochal crisis, when Christ shall return, we already have seen how the crisis will be precipitated and necessitated by the expulsion of Satan and his angels from heaven and his descent to the earth, having great wrath.

Secretly or openly the conflict has raged between

the Seed of the woman and the seed of the Serpent. During the Millennium that conflict will cease, for Satan will be bound. Satan is the "god of this age" —the dictator of the present course of things in the world. But during the Millennium Christ will reign supreme. After that beneficent reign, in which men will participate and share in its unparalleled advantages and blessings, another opportunity will be given to choose between Christ and Satan. Once it was Christ and Barabbas, and Christ was crucified! But the final issue is Christ or Satan.

Loosed from prison for only a short time, it is amazing how successfully Satan will deceive mankind and sting men into speedy revolt against the just and beneficent government of Christ (Rev. 20:7, 8). The nations are gotten quickly into line and assemble for the attack upon "the beloved city." Only by fire from heaven will the revolt instigated by Satan be turned into utter failure.

Satan's doom is sealed. That Postmillennial rebellion will be the last. The intensely dramatic career of Satan will end in inglorious defeat. Often his wiles have marvelously succeeded. Men ever have been his dupes. He has been permitted to sift not Peter only, but the entire race. We often have wondered why his career was not cut short at the beginning. Why did not God immediately curb Satan's power after his dastardly deed in the Garden? Why permit him to go on deceiving men and discrediting God during all the millenniums except the last?

Apparently that not only our first parents, but also all of their children should be tested as they were tested. The tragedy of Eden has been the tragedy of every life since then. No man, save One, has been able always to be victor over Satan. Each has been made to feel the bitterness and the remorse of sin. Every man needs Christ to fight the battle for him.

But finally, all tests being ended, and Satan's permissory work of deception being completed, he shall be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (20:10). The doom has been slow of execution, but the judgment will be righteous and will satisfy all of the demands of justice.

Postmillennial Ruin

Just prior to the return of Christ to establish His Millennial kingdom we found the world in open revolt —"the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army" (Rev. 19:19). This organized attempt of victorious armies to defeat the Rider upon the white horse reveals the hatred and audacity of those who are deceived by Satan. That widespread rebellion was quickly brought to an end. The allied armies were mysteriously destroyed by the sword that proceeded out of the mouth of Christ. Thus closed the conflict with Satan and his allies at the end of the Gospel Dispensation.

A similar conflict is scheduled to *follow* the Millennium. The allied armies of the earth will besiege Jerusalem. Fast trains, swift ocean liners, and swifter air ships, will make possible speedy and gigantic military operations such as the world never has witnessed. Acting in uniformity, taking orders from a single head, the pent up wrath of a thousand years will suddenly burst forth and hostile armies will envelope the world's capitol, bent upon the complete overthrow of the world's King. But this outbreak of human and satanic hatred against God will be the last. As of old God will miraculously deliver His people. Fire will come down from heaven and consume their enemies. This utter and speedy annihilation will end forever all rebellion against God.

The Racial Extent of the Postmillennial Revolt

The nations deceived by Satan will be located "in the four corners of the earth." The number of the allied armies will be "as the sand of the sea." They will go up to Jerusalem "over the breadth of the earth" (Rev. 20:8, 9). Such expressions indicate a world-wide revolt against the Millennial seat of government. It will be a thoroughly organized attempt by the dissatisfied among all the nations to overthrow the authority of Christ.

In attempting to account for such a widespread rebellion we must take into consideration not only the wiles of the Devil and the unchanged nature of mankind, but also the character of the Millennial

kingdom. Although the most enviable conditions will prevail, that kingdom will not be ideal. Its rule will be blessed indeed, yet characterized by rugged severity against offenders. Christ is to rule, but it will be "with a rod of iron" (19:15). Peace will prevail, but often at the cost of harshness. The political conditions will be unequal, for Israel will be supreme and the other nations in forcible subjection to her (Isa. 60:10-14). A government of coercion, however beneficial, may forestall all outward rebellion, but it cannot kill the rebel in the heart. When all repression is withdrawn mankind will fall an easy prey to the misrepresentations of Satan and in open revolt seek to take the government of the world again into their own hands. This is not a criticism of the form of government itself. The Millennial kingdom will be most blessed and glorious, and doubtless the best that God can establish under the circumstances. But we rejoice that there is to follow a reign of Christ that shall be flawless in its after-effects.

The Brevity of the Postmillennial Crisis

The epochal crisis that is to follow the Millennium will be short indeed. Its brevity may even exceed that of most of the preceding crises. These crises are the harvest seasons of the preceding dispensations. In them the wheat is separated from the chaff by sharp and decisive judgments. Brevity is one of their chief characteristics. They are as clearly distinguished

from the foregoing dispensations as the harvest season from the growing season.

The actual length of the Postmillennial epoch is not measured for us in days and years, but by the time between the loosing of Satan from prison and his being cast into the Lake of Fire. This loosing of Satan is said to be "FOR A LITTLE TIME" (Rev. 20:3). The brief season of his single campaign will be as astonishing as its magnitude. But mingled with Satan's singular daring and generalship is a surprising lack of an exact estimate of the strength and resources of the Lord. Inspired only by his vain ambition to grasp again the scepter of the world Satan seems to have remembered only his vast military successes during the Premillennial crisis, and to have strangely forgotten the annihilation of his forces at the battle of Har-Magedon (16:16). Such blinding ambition is not uncommon among his followers. But no sooner shall the rapidly assembled divisions and corps of the hostile armies have surrounded Jerusalem than miraculous deliverance shall be given to the saints. The quickly-gotten-up revolt shall be even more quickly ended. *All of the then living foes of Christ will be utterly consumed by fire from heaven.* God will forever put a stop to the rebellions of men and to the career of man's archenemy.

The Judgment of the Great White Throne
(Rev. 20:11-15)

Not only will all of the *living* enemies of Christ be

destroyed, but the Postmillennial crisis will be also the time for the judgment of the wicked dead. The Premillennial epochal crisis was a resurrection period for the saints and martyrs. They of that period were raised to share in the glories of the Millennium. But the Postmillennial resurrection is a resurrection unto judgment. It is even doubtful whether any names of those raised shall be found in the Book of Life.

The basis of judgment is "their works." No salvation by grace here. No Advocate to plead the cause of the guilty. The basis of judgment will be not faith, but the Divine record of the life. The cold facts of the life will be layed bare, and judgment will be exactly meted out.

The doom of those found guilty before the purity of the Great White Throne, by reason of the record of the books, is the Lake of Fire (v. 15). Prepared primarily for the devil and his angels it will also be the final doom of all who choose to serve the devil. This is the "second death," from which no power can ransom. Finally Death itself, "the last enemy," and Hades will be cast into the Lake of Fire. They will have served their purpose. In the new earth there will be no more death.

The Passing of Heaven and Earth

The Postmillennial judgment will have to do not only with the living nations which revolt against the authority of Christ, and with the wicked dead who are raised for judgment, but also with the existing heaven

and earth. Both have been the scenes of sin and violence. And not only are the angels who left their proper habitation, especially Satan, and sinful men, to be punished, but the very places of their sin are to be dissolved. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (20:11). This is the fulfillment of the incidental prophecy of Christ: "Heaven and earth shall pass away." There will be nothing to remind us of former defects and defeats. In the presence of that Face the old creation will dissolve from view and fade away.

It is not annihilation that is here taught, but the complete passing away of the old order of things; not extinction, but transition to something infinitely better. This sphere upon which Christ walked and talked and suffered and died, is too precious to be blotted utterly out of existence. Christ is to reign not for a thousand years only, but "unto the ages of ages (11:15). But not upon the old sin-cursed earth!

Peter tells us that the Noahic world "being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men." But this flame-swept earth will reappear. The same earth, yet so transfigured as to be *new*.

The New Earth

What warrant have we for depicting and defending these epochal crises? What is the gain of them? Why are they necessary? The answer to these questions is twofold. First, they have been shown to be necessary on account of the failure of man to hold his own against the development of evil which always becomes accelerated towards the close of each dispensation. The hopelessness of sin is its increasing momentum. However slow the progress at its beginning, we can bank upon its growing into uncontrollable proportions and attaining unmanageable speed. Therefore God has repeatedly intervened in the course of history and has forcibly checked the course of sin by devastating judgments.

In the second place, every such direct and personal intervention of God has been the occasion of introducing a new and better order of things. Each succeeding dispensation has been an advance upon the former. We have but to note the three that we have last considered—the Mosaic, the Christian, and the Millennial ages. For the whole world each was better than any that had preceded. But following the Postmillennial crisis the conditions will be as greatly improved as a new creation can make them. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away" (Rev. 21:1). It is this *new earth,* with its improved and perfected conditions, that now claims our attention.

The New Jerusalem

The chief center of attraction upon the new earth will be a holy city, in contrast with the wicked cities of the former earth. In every respect it will be an ideal city. But it will not be modeled after any city ever built by man. It is a city from heaven. "And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). The description of the city shows it to be *entirely new,* "having the glory of God." Its jeweled walls and foundations and streets, its unfailing and surpassing water supply, its marvelous lighting system, its perfect government, its pure worship,—all are absolutely new.

The problem of lighting a great city no longer puzzles the modern man. Yet no modern system of illumination is perfect, and it is exceedingly expensive. But there will be no dark corners or streets in the New Jerusalem, and the light will be free to all. "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb" (Rev. 21:23). Let the sun cool down and become a mere cinder, as some scientists claim. It would not affect the illumination of the City of God. Neither natural nor artificial light will be needed there, "for the Lord God shall give them light" (22:5). "And there shall be night no more." Illuminated by the presence of God, it will also partake of the glory of God. The vision of Christ granted to Paul upon the Damascus

road was above the brightness of the noonday sun. Yet the light of that city will not be blinding to those who dwell therein, but only beautiful and glorious.

"And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (22:1). What a water supply for a city! Pure, sparkling, running water. No paradise complete without a river. The source of the river that John saw was the throne of God. It was "a river of the water of life," and upon its banks grew the Tree of Life. The fruit of the Tree of Life was forbidden to Adam and Eve after they had sinned. But in the new earth none will be denied access to either the Water of Life or the Tree of Life in that city whose gates are open both day and night.

No temple will be in the New Jerusalem, "for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof" (21:22). No longer the worship of an invisible God, for "they shall see his face." Direct worship, with none to molest nor forbid, such as angels and archangels around the throne in heaven now enjoy.

The New Jerusalem will be a bridal city, wherein shall be the throne of God and the Lamb, the appointed seat of government for the new earth. If the description of the city is strongly Jewish, nevertheless "the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it" (21:24). There will be no uprising against the city

that comes down out of heaven from God, hence no need of future judgments upon the nations. The leaves of the Tree of Life will be for the continual healing, or health, of the nations. Here is not Paradise restored, but the *entire earth* a Paradise; from which the former curse is not simply removed, but which is never again to be cursed. "And there shall be no more anything accursed" (margin).

The People of the New Earth

No census of the new earth can yet be taken. But the "tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people" (21:3). All of the overcomers will be there, for "he that overcometh shall inherit these things" (v. 7). All who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be there (21:27). Christ's servants will be there: "And his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads" (22:3, 4). They will have received the kingdom that can not be shaken.

Their bliss will be without alloy. It is described in terms of negation, and in contrast with the miseries of our present world. From that new earth will be banished all of the ills caused by the entrance of sin into the old world. Never again anything to occasion the shame and the pain and the griefs of the present.

"And death shall be no more." The chief cause of sorrow. No home untouched. No circle unbroken. The present earth is one vast cemetery. Hourly the

hearse passes by. Weeping and wailing. At every season. Under all circumstances. Now gradually and stealthily approaching, now coming suddenly and unexpectedly. Now singly, now overwhelming multitudes. "No more." At the close of the Millennium, death was destroyed in the Lake of Fire. "And death shall be no more." No more weeping for loved ones ruthlessly taken from us. Nothing but life, life!

"Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more." All occasion for mourning and crying will be removed. Surcease from sorrow. Griefs and heartaches gone forever. No secret pangs of remorse. No smothered sobs. No outcry of pain. No ills, no aches, no tortures. No suffering of any kind. "Any more." The language of the seer is exhaustive. There will be absolutely nothing to mar the bliss or blight the happiness of the people of the new earth. "And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (21:5).

But the glorified descriptions of the new earth as given by the inspired seer can not be improved upon. Every attempt even to enlarge upon them ends in conscious failure. The above weak effort to do so is justified only by the hope that by dwelling upon some of the outstanding features we may realize anew the blessed conditions that are to follow the Postmillennial crisis. That age, or those ages, will be the acme of all that have gone before. And just as the Millennium will justify the execution of God's wrath against Satan and his angels and against unrepentant

men, so the glorified new earth will amply justify the destruction of Satan and his hosts through the judgment of the Great White Throne.

God's Methods Justified by His Purposes

God takes a far view of things. They who criticise His methods do not understand His purposes. In order to establish a world from which sin is to be entirely and forever eliminated, the hideousness and awfulness of sin must be so shown that men will never desire nor allow its repetition. This is why these epochal crises, with their extreme judgments, are necessary. And the study of them is thus of practical concern to us, especially since we now may be facing another one.

Throughout the ages one Divine all-inclusive purpose runs—"the restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old." Not only must sin be atoned for, but sin itself and all its evils must be utterly blotted out of existence. Therefore through millenniums of grace and divine forbearance, through repeated testings and siftings, through occasional but loving chastisements, through harsh and punitive judgments, God ever has had the one end in view, namely, the establishment of "the new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." When this consummation of human history is accomplished God's eternal wisdom and love will shine forth in all the effulgence of His own splendor.

From the vantage ground of the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, we shall look back over the varied millenniums of human history in connection with the former earth and the old regime and with shouts of rejoicing worship God and the Lamb who sit upon the throne.

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